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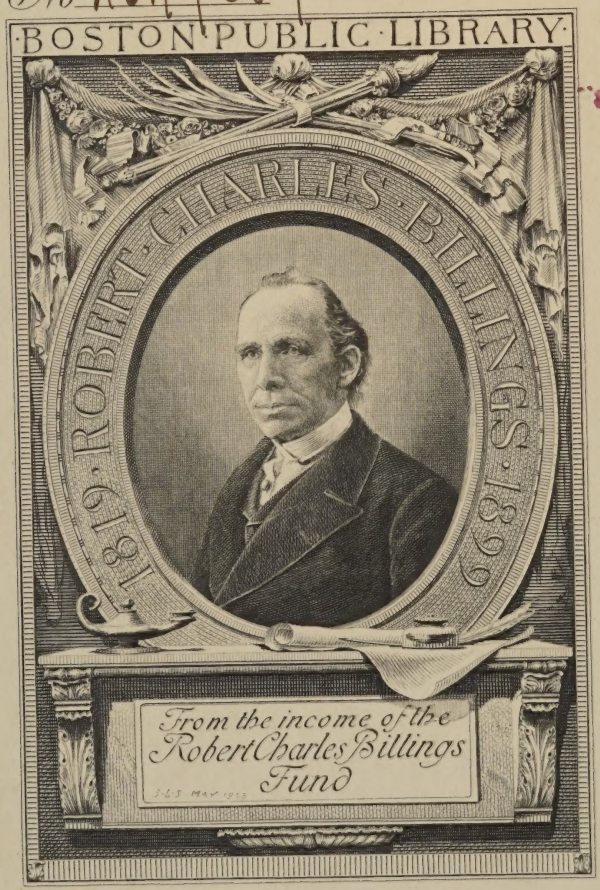

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CASTLES IN THE AIR

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[*Frontispiece.*

CASTLES IN THE AIR

THE STORY OF MY SINGING DAYS

VIOLA TREE

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PART I

INTRODUCTORY

PART I.

INTRODUCTORY.

AS I am not likely to be famous enough for posterity, I print these letters now, partly for my own edification, and partly, I hope, for the amusement of others. Going through them, piecing together and remembering, can only help me to recall an interesting period of my life. Those of my friends whom I have mentioned I cannot offend, as they have all given their permission ; those who are left nameless are those to whom my youthful criticisms might give pain.

I shall often be accused of bad taste, but how much better now than when I am dead, when my children will either have to bear the brunt, or have the trouble of burning the letters. It is better to make people shrug their shoulders now than weep later—and I suppose one or two might weep a little.

In the spring of 1909 I left the stage to be a singer. I had just played Portia in the Annual Shakespeare Festival at His Majesty's Theatre, and also, in a revival of Trilby with my father, a part I loved ; so it needed a great deal of ambition and a great deal of sacrifice to leave it all.

I adored acting with my father and being with him, but with all my opportunities, I felt I should never make a great career on the stage. I had thought so, but been disappointed in the result of my three or four years at it—I was too self-conscious. But in music I always felt taken out of myself, and I knew I had a great chance with that, helped by my dramatic training.

I was doing well at the Royal College of Music under Mr Visetti, Sir Walter Parratt in the choir, and Sir Charles Stanford, in the College operas. I had sung in two College performances, and was earning quite good money at concerts. The letters from Plunket Greene and Parry to my father show what English musicians thought of my future. Anyhow, they thought I was going to be useful, and English music at that moment had a tremendous "up." There was Beecham, with all his career and all his fortune intact. There was Marie Brema giving a very good performance and production of Gluck's *Orfeo* at the Savoy, in which I had scored a real success, and there was oratorio at its height, which I wanted to sing more than anything. Sir Walter Parratt said when I sang at Windsor *The Creation*, and at Eton the Brahms' *Requiem*, that I had the real tone for a religious voice. Amongst my personal friends were Percy Grainger, Quilter and Tovey, and Faure and Debussy; singing, for which I had a flair, was popular after every dinner—not a bore as it is now.

Still it was not enough—I wanted a more powerful voice, and I wanted my voice and training to be taken seriously. If I have a good quality, it is not being ashamed of making a fool of myself, and there is ample evidence of it in this story, and the fact that I have not eliminated its follies in order to make myself appear wise.

I will try for a moment to look at things detachedly.

The letters to A. P. were written by somebody very young with only two ideas in her head—to marry the young man to whom they are addressed, and to become a singer. It appeared then to this thin, tall, arrogant somebody, whom I now can scarcely recognise as myself, that the world was made for her to achieve her ambition; that marriage to this particular person would only be achieved by singing, and that singing was only made worth while by the thought of achieving marriage at the end of it.

At home he was thought too young to marry, being still at Oxford, and she was thought too foolish by some, too exceptional by others. Plans were being laid—the stage to reclaim her from singing, society to reclaim her from marriage. She, on the other hand, thought of her pilgrimage to Italy as a sort of Penelope's loom to keep other suitors and distractions away.

The contrast between the writer and the receiver of the letter could not have been greater—he sombre, a scholar, reticent, dark; she with a "take the wind out of your sails" manner, a prey to the nearest emo-

tion, neither sensitive not reticent, divinely tall and fairly fair, a loud voice, overwhelming health, a superb sleeper. Her only delicate things were her ankles and her vocal chords.

So, at least, I see myself as I was then, but like the Portrait of the Artist it may well be a flattering one.

A friend once told me that recent events made bad letters, and in my egotism much that might have been interesting to the world of my student's life in Milan was left out, while my own little emotions were faithfully recorded.

And when the letters were too private or personal to print, I have set down my memories of events which the lapse of sixteen years has scarcely dimmed.

From Diary, *1st September* 1910.

Sat round table in dining-room with mother, sisters, and Maria. A slight passage-at-arms between me and Felicity when her red hair made me see red. I said: "Yes, that's all right, but wait till I get to Milan"—a general outburst of inane laughter. I said: "Why?" Mademoiselle said: "*Mais quand, ma chère?*" I said: "Next week." This settled it, and I feel free—free not so much from Mother and Father, whom I love, as from the toils of nursery and schoolroom clocks, compulsory glasses of milk, and "be careful how you cross the road, darling." Yes, I am on my own, or I shall be—in six days. It reminds me of the time

when I was five and I went to M'Pherson's gymnasium. When we crossed the last crossing I was allowed to run on alone, my Indian clubs knocking together in a string-bag behind my back. I kept saying half out loud, "Free! free!"

Once the door of the train is shut I shall be free—that train from London to Milan that seems merely to change into a boat at Dover and back into a train at Calais—marvellous!

From Memory.

We lived then in a wedged-shaped house facing the Langham Hotel at the top of Regent Street. I never cared for it; perhaps because it followed the lovely Walpole House at Chiswick, being so fine and romantic. I think indifference to the house made me feel freer to go. I was naturally a homing bird, and had never had any independence before. I must have had many arguments, but I eventually got my way, for I started about 5th September 1910.

My dear master at the Royal College of Music, who hated to lose me as I hated to lose him as a master, very unselfishly escorted me out to Italy. He had much work to do, and I do not think in all the years I have known him he had time to go abroad; yet, he went out for three days on purpose to take me. He wished to place me with a teacher, and satisfy himself that he or she was actually the right person.

He had coached me into the two College operas, and he and his wife are still amongst my dearest friends.

Ellen Terry wrote me from Bruges in her own hand, when I set out on my adventure, a letter marked "private—such rubbish!" but nothing she ever wrote or did was rubbish.

"To you and all you love I write the sweetest dreams of love and happiness. I am wishing dreams could be given away like cards. But most likely you have a sheaf of happier dreams than mine have ever been—I pray it may be so. My love to your father and mother. I love you all, strange! since you are all lovable. Take fortune's buffets and rewards with equal thanks and believe I am your friend, Ellen Carew."

From Diary, 5th *September*.

In the train. We have just passed Paris and its thrilling Louise reminiscences.

Once out of England everything is charged with romance. I don't realise a bit yet that I am gone, but just feel rested and natural.

From Memory.

Maria Schweter, sometimes called Mademoiselle, with whom I spent so much of the two years of this book, was about my own age, but much more responsible. She was small and very slight, with a little tripping walk like a starling. She had the beautiful peach skin that goes with peach-stone-coloured hair, a very high laugh, and red laughing mouth—indeed she made play

Photo. by J. Thomson.] [*To face p.* 16.

with her mouth and eyes so much that after a time we were persuaded she was a beauty. She had all the archness of a nun-like character, and looked what in Gilbert and Sullivan Operas is called a soubrette. Her pianoforte playing was far above the average, too good for me on whom she was wasted. We lost sight of her during the War, when of course she was in Germany, then we heard of her in the Argentine; perhaps this book may help to find her.

2nd September.

I feel so happy we are nearly there, and it is very hot, though I am closely enveloped in a black cloak. I feel about the Simplon tunnel that one always emerges into quite a new atmosphere as though one has gone through the world, or through the looking-glass to Aladdin's palace and sunshine, and the opposite when one comes back—"Abandon hope all ye who enter here!" We have passed Lago Maggiore and the Islands, beautiful except for the damned mountains, which I shall always hate in spite of Ruskin and his "incredible wreaths and crests." No, give me the plains and the little hills.

John Sargent is on the train with his sister, and we are sitting in the restaurant car, which is like being in the stocks—the tables are so tight, and once there one is there for good, and pilloried by dressed discoboli who fling soup plates before one with great dexterity. I feel a fool not to know the language.

We are through the tunnel now. Not a cloud—and burning hot vines and Indian corn.

To A. P., *7th September*. MILAN.

You know that naughty Mademoiselle has never turned up. I will give her a good lecture when she does. Oh yes, I suppose I have been alone, prey to all the adventurers of the town—and my word!—there are a lot, old and young, all more or less in fancy dress: the young mostly beautiful, and staring and staring whether one is accompanied by Visetti or not.

I had such a funny dinner with him—dinner outside the big café—opposite to Biffi's in the Galeria, then coffee at Biffi's itself. The Galeria is the market of artists, as it might be the Haymarket if it were under cover and had cross roads instead of only Charles Street. V. explained this to me, and told me that the man who built it committed suicide from its glass roof the day it was finished, whether because it was a blot on the landscape I do not know—but, of course, barring its incongruousness, it's an interesting place. The way the singers barter their voices—to impresarios! V. says that every woman here has a lover, and every man as many wives as he likes.

Meanwhile it is gloriously hot, and I am not going to sleep in a Shetland sweater, but I dare say I shall regret it. I have found where your curious wrong-headed ideas about dress come from. All the women

here wear black, with large black hats and black feathers with sometimes a small touch of red—your Italian ancestry asserting itself in your taste.

To A. P., *8th September.*

Maria not arrived yet, but we are tracing her to a convent where she has gone so typically. Meanwhile I have been looking for pensions and also agents. The first thing I did when I found myself alone was to jump into a small fly and go to a big lace shop in the Via Dante (sort of Piccadilly) and buy an embroidered pillow which I thought would be luxuriously independent and improper, unlike my homely schoolroom life. It cost quite a quarter of my entire pocket-money. Then I went to pick up V. and we went together to the impresario—the great big one, Tito Ricordi, who owns half the music in Italy. He was "from home," so we left V.'s card and I am to go to him later. We then went to another part of the town—a little cabbage-y street—to Fano, who really is very useful, artistic, and friendly. Rather against, but rather afraid of the other impresario.

He looks decadent and pale, with a red beard for no reason, and advises not Tetrazzini [1] to whom I had letters of introduction but Mme. Arkel, who is more modern, and has been a great *teatrante.* We then, having promised to come to F. again, repaired to the house of Mme. A., which was in a beautiful piazza looking on to the castle. Stairs that never, never end,

[1] Sister to Tetrazzini the famous singer.

and at the topmost floor written over a door, it is entreated to "wipe with the foots." There was some point in this, as the floors about here are evidently mostly stone, which is waxed and which makes even the most commonplace houses pretty and chic.

I went in with fear and trembling. She was giving a lesson at the time, and when I sent the letter in from Tosti she sent all her pupils away and came out to see me, into the *anticamera*; then I went into a tiny room and sang *Tosca* badly ("Vissi d'Arte") with a rather forced voice, *Bohème* rather well. She played them divinely by heart, and said I had a "*très belle voix*" and "*ça sera une très grande voix.*"

I am to do only exercises at first (how many times this has been said to me, by how many teachers). I begin to-morrow. She said I had a great deal of *temperament*, which means something better in French than in English.

This evening two men at Biffi's made great eyes at me, though I looked mulish. But I mustn't let my letters get Bashkirtseffy.

I am looking everywhere for rooms. All the houses are so *sweet*, always with a courtyard and tropical plants. One pension we went to was right in the heart of things—very dirty outside, but it had a huge room with a parquet floor and a frieze of grapes, which I am sure were painted by Luini, in a mood of desœuvreness. However, I was persuaded against that

by Maria, who arrived at last full of gesticulating winks, blinks, and nods. She made me clinch with a pension in the new part of the town, called Sempione —sort of sky-scrapers, only low ones, about four stories, with beautiful gutters that make everything clean; no exotic plants in the courtyard, though, which I yearned after, but cheap!—ten francs a day, with food. Don't ever expect your girl back!

To A. P., 10*th September*.

My darling,—How funny that you should have written me entirely a love letter—while mine was entirely colloquial and tiresome.

I don't think I want to write to you about my singing; it will change so from day to day. V. has gone, poor sweet! I made him miss his train by taking him to Monza, which turned out to be Ravenscourt Park. It is really a park, I suppose—anyhow, it's a park where a king and queen were killed.

He was so good to me—I heard him telling mother at parting that I should be away six months! My word! Much more than that, I feel.

Yes, I do think of you when I cross the road. It's strange, but I do.[1]

[1] He was in a terrible state about my being run over, though I was more than grown up. A. kept all my letters. I wrote a little nearly every day—always in tremulous haste and never sufficiently stamped, fivepence being the least he had to pay on each time. They were on very thin Italian paper, and when I had collected about four sheets I sent them off undated—but the postmarks have been a help.

I am glad you aren't entirely Italian; they are so superficial in their loves; all their passions are skin-deep, though they make such moan about them—much more like me, in fact.

To A. P., 11*th September*.

Via Laura 22.

We have moved into our lodgings. Don't let me ever be as squalid—not exactly squalid, but as commonplace and beautyless—as this, will you, darling?

You will have to tear up some of my letters from here; I feel that they won't be very good, but they may be odd. Yours are life to me, don't forget—an enormous gift and help. I thrill when I see them. Never write short ones; as I say, keep them like these till they are filled up.

Later.

A strange new development in these rooms—the two landladies, to whom Grannie is Siegfried[1] as compared to them in youth and energy, have each got voices, one like Melba's and the other like Lily Elsie's, only a thousand times better. It is a wonderful country. They can none of them walk much, but they can sing *Mephistopheles* and *Aïda*, and while one sings the other makes sarcastic remarks. I find myself listening with rapture to Mascagni's music. I am afraid my taste will go down.[2]

[1] Grannie was my grandmother of ninety, very frail and tiny.

[2] It did.

But Mme. A., who is a great musician, has heard me sing Strauss now, and says she is very much impressed with my brain! They have gone to the root of things at once—my bad high notes and breathing support. I wish I could find the secret of that *appui* they talk of, which I always pretended I knew in England.

I have nothing to read except the scores of operas. I have made a mistake bringing only music. I have the Byrons, but they aren't bed-books, and should be read aloud.

You are wonderful about letters, and I love to see your dear handwriting shining through the window of the porter's lodge.

Last night the old woman began to sing "Wenn ich in Deine Augen seh" in Italian. I could hardly bear it, and rather electrified them with the whole of Schumann's first volume in German.

I went with Maria to Ricordi, the big impresario I told you of. Tosti's name gets me anywhere. I sang shockingly *Tosca* and the "Ave Maria" from *Otello*. He said: "*questi acuti valgano quindici centesimi*," but I was to come again in *quinze jours*. He is terribly attractive and bullying, like Napoleon. He does not approve of you, and was not much taken with me—more so with Maria, who apologised and bluffed for me. I looked lovely, though, in my black Jay dress that I had for King Edward's funeral, and great black hat, and your ivory beads.

Do you know, these Italians let me into a great many secrets of their character—they are highly intelligent, very desultory, and the women do all the work; the men adore their children and spend half their time playing with them; the rest they spend listening to music and saying: "*molto molto bello!*" or "*che porcheria*" (what piggery) according to what they feel. They are as casual but very wide awake.

To A. P., 15*th September.*

We went to Luino yesterday—told to me by Comyns Carr. I was strongly dissuaded by the people of Italy from making this journey. They said: "*é vecchio,*" and "*On y fabrique des biscuits—voila tout!*" However, I went: well worth it—a little church, perfectly decorated throughout by Luini, and quite unknown to ordinary travellers, I should think. Afterwards we went up a little mountain near by, and I found gentians—bad and old, but still gentians—and those lovely autumn crocuses—they grow on the Alps, too.

To A. P., 16*th September.*

Oh, I wanted to tell you—are you jumping to too many conclusions about my singing? They think I have three beautiful notes—C, E, F, above middle C, but they hope the others will get like them. They don't think I shall be a dramatic soprano.

Darling, I am so utterly sad, and crying dreadfully (Bashkirtseff again!) and I want you to know about it; yet I feel I must be misunderstood, even by you, because of all my moods and false words and strange changes, and my utter inability to explain things on paper.

Are you far on in life enough to know what a great thing we may make of our love or what a small thing? I, who for my age have been much tossed about in life, realise more personally, though not so intelligently, the way marriage can drop into a normal level of cynicism, and snobbishness, and ambition and dilettanteism. If only I had you with me! It seems a sin that we should be apart an instant, and that I shouldn't be ekeing out my little hundreds with you in one room instead of with Mademoiselle in two.

Later.

Will you make real efforts, darling, to send me the green Italian grammar from your home, as our serious lessons begin to-morrow, by the advice of Fano?—"*Senza la pronuncia non si fa niente.*" Of course, pronunciation is very tiring. I am to learn with a strange little round woman named Pozzi, living by the canal—quite an airless little home—and she thinks me a miracle of originality, sparkle, etc., having "heard all about me." "*Ho sentito; ho sentito!*" God knows from where!

I am wearing your red corals to-day, looking rather pretty. I have come to the conclusion they are alabaster, as, of course, ivory is light and corals have a duller effect—and yet they are like my white corals in substance. Good-bye.

Shall I be here a year? I think I shall, if not more, as it is pretty certain that I can't be engaged for this season, which begins in December at the Scala, and at the Dal Verme, second best, next Sunday. Perhaps next year I shall be engaged for it.

I am very hopeful, but not *too*. I am always so sad that no one says "My God!" or "Madonna" or "Misericordia" when they hear me. They just say "lovely voice" and "*beaucoup d'esprit*" or "*molte passione!*" "*Molte passione!*" is the best praise, as it's un-English of me to have that. Of course, they are *common*; they like outward show, and quivering nostrils, and teeth, and spangles. Anything we love—Brahms from Grieg to Elgar, is "*Quella musica fredda tedesca!*"

Ricordi told me of Rossini's great *mot*, but since then I have been told it every other day as a chestnut. "*Ha sentito quello che ha detto il grande Rossini?*" they ask, and I answer, "*Si*," then, remembering, "*No, no, no!*" "*Per il canto ci vuole voce, voce, e voce!*"—the last said as an afterthought.

They don't even understand Melba, who has at all events *voce e voce*.

A peculiar race!

To A. P., *21st September*.

I do appreciate your letter and your not having ticked off my remarks as woman's idiosyncrasies, as you used to my drawings. Your idea was that I, like every woman, liked tea and could draw. Do you remember?

It is baking now, with a dull blue sky, and I have been lying very uncomfortably on a narrow iron balcony, which the Italians thought mad. "*Prendera il sole!*" they say, "You will take the sun," as though it were measles; also that it will give one a cold, which seems a paradox, but time no doubt gives it proof.

I have sent you Jean Christophe, which I think a great book. I am buying the other volumes by degrees; you will understand it better than I do because you know more actual words, and some of the ideas puzzle me; but, heavens, how I know the women's characters! I hope you will plod through it. This is the last volume, you understand.

To A. P., *22nd September*.

This is my life. I wake up at eight. Maria wakes me with coffee and honey, which I eat sleepily. Then I get slowly up and do Sandows at ten, and either sit

down to the piano and play rather desultory Schumann's or Louise, or I go out with Maria to the Galeria, which is the heart of the town and leads out on to the Cathedral Piazza. One buys jolly things there, but rather the sort of things that are in glass cases at hotels —Metropole—Carlton—that one feels aren't really to buy—gold ormolu clocks, and too rare handkerchiefs, and too well-bottled scent. Are they ever bought ? I don't buy anything because Maria won't let me spend money.

At twelve-thirty we all have lunch together at the pension—a delightful neurotic Florentine lady of thirty, and the two landladies—macaroni and figs, and wine, and meat, which makes Maria scold everybody, as it is so bad and gives her Magenkrampf—" It gates my estomac, cara." She never makes use of less than three languages in a sentence, which has a sprightly, though untidy, effect.

Immediately after this meal, I lie down on a very narrow bed, as I am now, facing an unbuilt-on piece of ground and a high piece of sky, and read or sleep till three. At three I sit down to Mozart duets with Maria, and she coaches me and says : " *Non, non, il faut être severe avec vous, comme un petit enfant, autrement, c'est waste of time.*" I generally have a row over this, and she makes tea at four, just to clear the air. At four-thirty I start for my lesson. Mme. A. lives near here, so I walk there through the little

gardens. She is beautifully dressed and looks what she is—a fat, faded, Polish-Jewish beauty. Her profile is rather fine, like the Bilitis pictures, and her eyes—her full face is still a profile, and her hair stiffly crimped. She gives me a lesson in a room full of gaudy trophies of past successes—a good deal of "*a ma chère Therese, S. Scotti,*" and tambourines decorated with "*Plaussissimi dalla Scala*" on red ribbons—the room is quite dark, so as to exclude the heat, or, when cold, I suppose to exclude cold.

Her whole house is most odd: scrupulously clean. Her best room she doesn't use at all, like gardeners or peasants in England. It is entirely filled with gold, rather fine, furniture, and I had a peep at it the day we first came, V. and I, when he explained that he relied on her to give me the *notes in my voice* which he himself had not been able to give me; a statement to which she refers bitterly as being sarcastic, but now believes it was in good faith, as, after all, he suggested I should come, and brought me over.

Well, still on about her house. It is decorated, I should think, *a l'Inglese*—that is to say, a Victorian-Italian idea of English Gothic, evidently based on Walter Scott or Bulwer Lytton—a very few small gargoyles protruding everywhere from mustard-colour brocade, an umbrella stand the triumph of false and intricate heraldry, and the Arms of Arkel emblazoned over a very small portière door, the said portière sup-

ported by flimsy cardboard spears and halberds. You never saw such a thing as the passage leading out of this baronial hall, winding away into vague dining-rooms, linen cupboards, and a clinique—where her husband evidently leads a sort of Dr Faustus life, as I have never known him have a patient yet!

After this we do a little marketing—mostly grapes; they are glorious tiny purple bunches, and cheap. Then I mooch about till seven-thirty dinner.

If not too tired after, we do more music, but as I never sing out except at lessons it isn't much fun—and so to bed. The life never changes, and I am not at all satisfied with the amount of work, there being so much to fulfil in a short time.

We have Italian lessons—two a week—and I am very quick at them, but I can't and won't do grammar. I have never yet nor ever shall know what a pronoun is, and as to a possessive pronoun, it might as well be a badger. Mademoiselle is slow but sure over her grammar, but I am waiting for it to come instinctively, as it does to me in French. I can hardly make a mistake in *le* and *la* in French or German, and I have never learned either grammar.

Your books have just come—the hundred best—and I have never read one except *Wives and Daughters*, years ago. I am wickedly plunging into *Boccaccio* first.

To-night the two old Siegfrieds (as compared to

Granny) came in and saw me in my chemise. They said: "*Che bella figura! come una statua!*" My figure is exquisite—yes—but not their sort; so I am very pleased to find an artistic sense in them after all.

To A. P., *25th September.*

Arkel's son is like a monkey of twelve, but he is twenty-three—the natural product of semi-artist, semi-bourgeoisies. I never saw anything like him—talk about "boudoir boys!" He begins by telling one of the *maitresses* he had when he was fifteen—*think!* and that I ought to go on the *Lago di Como avec un petit flirt!* Characteristically, the only English he knows is "I ham theersty to keees you," or "I glurve you."

I wish I could take your idea of a sketch map of my life. I am afraid I am not the right person, somehow. I see myself in the glass when I am having my lesson—a funny little red face on the top of a strong blue body much too big for my head. She makes me watch myself so as to be sure of displaying the whole of my teeth, as she says it's the secret not only of tone but beauty. *Che belleza ha la sua faccia, ma senza sorriso! niente!* Very true, I expect, but my face irritates me and I long to get away from it, especially as I am very often crying, and seeing myself cry naturally makes me cry.

To A. P., *26th September.*

To-night they said: "*Quand vous épousez votre mori, il n'aimerait pas que vous jouiez à l'Opéra: il sera jaloux.*"[1] "*Non—il a trop d'intelligence.*" "*L'amour n'a rien à faire avec l'intelligence, Mademoiselle!*" "*Oh, oui, Madame,*" etc.

I know for certain that, however many tenors I admired, it would have no effect on your love for my singing or your love for me, would it?

Thank you for sending me T.'s letter; it makes me sad to think how many people are prejudiced against me beforehand, like him—and why? Will anyone tell me? I understand singers, for instance, thinking I have a snubbing manner, and that I get on unfairly quickly for my years, but no ordinary men and women. I am sad at this, but glad—oh, glad with all my heart! —that they think you lucky.

I saw an aeroplane to-day for the first time: a beautiful and touching sight. The funny part is that Dr Arkel and I cried separately, from different windows, I mean. Glorious people, the Italians! All traffic stopped completely—everyone was in the street.

To-day I have sudden and violent regret for the peeress robes, and how beautiful I should have looked in them![2]

[1] When you marry your husband he won't like you to sing, he will be jealous, etc.

[2] I suppose this means that by trying very hard I might have married a peer's or duke's son.

It seems too odd and unnatural that I should volunteer to leave you ; I expect mother thinks it a sign of little love.

Good-night, my dear ; *I am so* tired.

27th September.

Mme. A. is so troubled to know whether I am a soprano or mezzo, and she made me sing old "Dalilah" yesterday to know if I could do it. She says I can. But I am hoping the high notes will come—"the greatest soprano, the greatest contralto the world has ever known" (see Svengali), but I unfortunately know that I haven't a great or wonderful voice—a lovely, religious, passionate voice sometimes—yes, but nothing exceptional. Yet when I was a little girl it was rather wonderful, Heaven knows !

The point is that when one's high notes (*acuti* they are called here) are weak, they say one is a contralto, and vice versa—like when people are bad at comedy they pretend they are tragedians, or bad prose writers say they are poets, and so on.

Let us realise our limitations while we may.

I have read *l'Aube*—the first volume of Jean Christophe—but I find it a little bit what we don't like about Victor Hugo, as, of course, it's all about a child. Still, of course, it's very clever—not to compare with *Les Amies*.

28th September.

I am worried about my singing. I don't know that it is better ; in the daytime it is so weak and froggy.

The husband of Mme. A. has at last enticed me into his web of a clinique, and he is going to pick up my throat.

To A. P., *30th September.*

Oh, my darling, I am so miserable and lonely, and cry and cry—and I can't go to sleep—and I've read the *Window in Thrums* of all things, after having tried for a long time to sleep. I know that the landladies will see the light now and want to put it out.

I have days like to-day when I regret the Milan step, when I think I am a fool not to have gone to Tosti and taken a studio. It's all a myth about abroad.

Bruno has been to call. Except for the name Bruno he has few advantages. He is a splendid *farceur* pianist, and he has the most beautiful arms, which he shows one, and then forgets that he has and shows them again. I ordered "He's a Cousin of Mine" and "Moonstruck" all the way from Chappell's to give him, so you can guess his type, but then his name is Bruno, and he is, oh ! bright, bright—knowing English in two days !

I cried all the morning because my voice was going —that's two days crying hard. Yours.

To A. P., *2nd October*.

I am in such a curious state of nerves and frenzied outbursts against Mademoiselle (Maria); I don't know whether it is because I am starving, or because I drink too much wine, or what. What are the things that make one hysterical, besides starvation? I have never had "nerves" before, and they are odd. Tea gives nerves, but I have only a small cup of "Blue Star China Tea," all one can get here.

What arguments I have with Mademoiselle! And how I overturn the pianos in the temple! And I can't sleep a bit. I wonder if it's the air? Anyhow, it's very like an artist, isn't it? Like Beethoven, or Wagner. I did such marvellous imitations of Melba to-night! The question is, shall I be able to keep Melba's notes when I gain the dramatic force?

4th October.

You will hardly believe I am writing this in an interval of *Traviata*, sitting with a cripple almost on top of me, and several men standing on my heels. I listening to it with the greatest attention; I who have several times been offered boxes for Melba in the same rôle and refused them! Here I am, for one franc *entrata*. You find what seat you can and the peasants talk across from one side of the gallery to the other, and say—"*Guido! Guido! venga!*" having found a

good place. The other great thing is *gasoocs* and carameli. What gasoocs is I don't know, but it's orange colour, and sticky, and handed round—and no one up here, but we, can afford it.

I am writing this on a leaf of the score of *Traviata*; please preserve it. The Protagonists, as they call it, is good; rather pretty, with beautiful clothes by Caramba, given her by her lover, no doubt. They buy their own clothes, except at the Scala, where productions are on a large scale. She wears a gold dress in the first act—tier upon tier of gold lace—very effective and much better than any clothes worn in England in opera. Caramba is a sort of Simmons, with a touch of Percy M'Quoid, and a very large dash of Granville Barker.

They haven't very much enthusiasm for her to-night, though I find her extremely good. They want people who stay on their notes half an hour. The other night, the first night, in a pitiable little opera called *Guillaume Tell*, you should have heard them! There was a claque, or clack, or clique against the little tenor—probably because of some vendetta—and his enemies were there and hissed him down whenever he sang. Then he got to his big aria with a *Si bemol* (high B) in it, and they became quite intoxicated. Those that hissed him before applauded, and shouted *bis* wildly, at which he repeated the aria.

I was not accustomed to their cries and did not know

the " ayes " from the " noes," but I was explained it afterwards by a very kind rag-picker on my left. In the end they remembered their vendetta and he was hissed at the last.

6th October.

Would it amuse you to know how we live, per month ?

	£	s.	d.
Pension (eating ; rooms for two)	12	0	0
Singing lessons	6	0	0
Italian lessons	1	4	0
Maria's salary . . .	4	0	0
Hire of piano	0	5	0
Music library	0	2	0
Extra, as not enough to eat ; milk, butter, eggs . . .	12	0	0
Fun (trains, shoes—expeditions) .	3	4	0
	£38	15	0

I thus spend seven pounds, about, over my allowance per month ! so I hope to go into our own rooms in a nice slum, which will be cheap. That pension, twelve pounds, is a frightful hole in my own £20 a month, so is dear Maria's salary, but a servant would cost nearly as much, and Maria saves me an accompanist.

9th October.

I am rather inclined to sell our Dole cupboard we bought together for a good five pounds, because one

can get for it here marvellous sideboards and chests of inlaid ribbon wood, about Directoire period, orange coloured—but just as you think.

I am writing this sitting in the park in the sun; there are lots of people in the park, but they don't seem to mind. Do you remember when you insisted on making love to me in Hyde Park, when all the dukes were walking there with their daughters?

About writing a play; here are suggestions.

"Suggestions for author's handbook, beginning with a quick list of bright, wooing titles, such as Ropes, Stakes (beef or betting), Boredom, Grease, Riff, Raff, Trousers, The Formaminters, The Whiff.

"The list need not be long, as the titles can be taken over again about every two years. They need have no relation to the subject of the play. In cases where the author has three or four plays running at the same time, it will be better for him to choose titles like Raff and Riff, thus creating an interesting and profitable confusion."

11th October.

I went to Ricordi again to-day; he was charming this time, and he thinks I ought to begin studying Elsa and Desdemona at once, then I shall be ready in a year. He doesn't rave a bit; he says one or two of my notes are impossible to Italian ears—D, E, and F, —but that G, and A, are beautiful, and that my high C is very easy (he took me up the scale—very lightly,

of course). He says the other notes are metallic, and that I ought to work only at these notes. He says Destin wouldn't be tolerated here because of that very quality, so admired in England but here called *fischio di treno* (train whistle).

He then asked me how old I was. I said, "Oh, monsieur, I am much older than I look." He then guessed twenty-four—but, to the world I am twenty-two for the next five years!

14th October.

To-night I am worrying terribly because I can't think what I shall wear as Tosca and as Elsa, also worrying because I feel they won't let me sing Salome, which would be my great part, also I can't think how to do the dance in *Electra*. This kind of worrying is so far worse than wondering if Beecham will take me into his chorus or not, because it's endless and feverish. Oh, Lord! I *am* like Marie Bashkirtseff.

I often think how glorious it would be to hear an opera and enjoy it for the music's sake, and without saying: "Oh, you foolish woman! Why can't you do this, or that, or the other, as I would were I in your place?" This Italian method will ruin me for oratorio, yet oratorio voice will kill me here.[1]

[1] This was a very wise observation.

16th October.

I have seen the rooms [1] of my life—big, huge, parquet Italian suite—with a lovely woman like Mary Magdalen as landlady, who has a lovely little boy like Joseph. I also saw a delicious, smallish house. I can't eat any of this food, except grapes; so, of course, I am dying from weakness. Maria, on the other hand, eats a heaped-up pyramid of food, like on the stage.

17th October.

I am thinking of furnishing some rooms. What do you think? The houses cost thirty pounds a year and the furniture would come to fifty more net, and linen.

I hear that Ricordi never makes a contract for less than three years, and then it's mostly for all over the world, and singing here a good bit, too, in which case I should want the rooms pretty often.

We saw *Mephistopheles* last night, and learned a good deal from a young and unknown soprano, Bona Plata, a Spaniard.

I am rather jealous of Laura's royal wedding. How glorious it must have been! Her ropes of pearls and spiked crowns and postillions! and I know that, even if we do have the Grieg march played, we shan't come

[1] This was the pension, 1 Carlo Porta, to which I went the following year.

up to that unless we are married in St Paul's—but I should have to be a very great singer for that.

God knows my voice has gone back! I think because of my scanty food. I couldn't sing *Orfeo* to save my life—I tried last night.

It is Saturday now. It is rather quiet—I suppose I must send this rotten letter. Thanks for your sweet one! I have bought a very ugly hat, but what do you care? I look *hideous* wearing my striped muslin black and blue, and your real corals, and I feel gloriously strong.

Maria is saying I have only done half an hour's piano to-day—poor wretch!

Love and kisses to Brown Eyes, as Crippen would say. Poor old Crippen![1] I am sure he is as innocent as the day, but he has the most *touching* way of telling little untruths! The Lord Chief Justice is in his favour, I am quite certain. What a nice man Tobin is—full of human kindness and sentiment.

[1] Hawley Harvey Crippen—Dr Crippen—was tried for the murder of his wife, Belle Elmore, a music-hall artiste. This was tried before Lord Alverstone, Lord Chief Justice of England. Counsel for the Crown, R. D. Muir; for the prisoner, Mr Tobin, K.C. The case attracted universal attention because of the peculiar brutality of the murder, and because of the cleverness of Crippen, who very nearly got away with his lady-lover dressed as a boy. They were found out because the poor little thing, Miss Le Neve, had pinned up her trousers with safety-pins, which was noticed as peculiar by the captain of the boat. Why I sympathise with him, this exceptional, horrible person, is a mystery, but I think it must have been that they were lovers under adverse circumstances—and that I had a fellow-feeling for them.

What I want to know is—where *is* Belle Elmore? Talking of this, I wrote to Mr Asquith, half humorously, to ask for the life of Crippen to be spared. I think it's too dreadful and I cried yesterday, and do pray that Belle Elmore will come one day to claim her own again.

FROM MY FATHER, *21st October*.

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

Dearest Viola,—To-day I went to the Crippen case (I am sure the news will interest you). It was a strange sight—the man with a rope about his neck struggling to be free. There can be little doubt of his being found guilty, and I confess I felt no pity for him. He is a deep-dyed hypocrite. The court scene was wonderfully impressive, and unexaggerated. Crippen was quite calm and unabashed, indeed he often snapped a smile with his battery of false teeth.

Isn't it really wonderful to think that we are really "coining" money? I should like to go to America. We are going to have a gala performance here in Coronation time—all arranged by that dear Prince.

Pray forgive me for not writing sooner, but I have been fearfully busy. I hope all your work is still going well and hopefully. When do you think of returning? I must see you before the end of the year I think it is necessary that you should soon actually appear on the operatic stage, the precious months are fleeting by. But I dare say Milan will give you all you

want in the way of *volume of voice*—that is what you want.

Felicity has grown quite fat. We all went to Sutton Courtney on Sunday ; I thought the little house quite awful, but I dare say mother will make something out of it. Shall I talk to Alan about you ? I think I will. I went to the Ribblesdale wedding.[1] The service was wonderful. Then I took the children to the Prime Minister's, and afterwards to the Carlton to lunch, which they enjoyed hugely. They are just calling me, so I will send the letter off just like this and will endeavour to write a second chapter to-morrow,

Your father, HERBERT TREE.

To A. P., 19*th October*.

Darling my voice is going fast. I have heard so much about cracked voices in Italy, and English throats not standing the strain, and so on. Now I find mine is leaving me. You see, I never sing at all, all day, not even soft Schumann's, until my lesson. At my lesson I heard a strained, cracked sound, and it's either going to blossom out like a chrysalis—I mean like a butterfly—or it's going altogether.

I shall try one more month and then cut adrift from Mme. A. She is the nicest woman in the world, and I shan't know what to say. Perhaps I have

[1] Lady Lovat, Lord Ribblesdale's second daughter, married at the Brompton Oratory.

simply got paralysis of the throat—that's all right—then I'll take up Art (painting).

DIARY, *22nd October.*

In despair, looking for houses. Saw one glory in Piazza St Ambrogio—too dear; lovely garden—practically monastery; grisaille staircase; perfect portinaia; shining American furniture. Too dear. Maria obdurate; go into each house. Many refusals because they suspect impropriety. Then finally went to agents; agents also suspect single young ladies not bedizened enough for artists. However, saw fair young man, rather beautiful, offering his apartment for a song; asked if could see it. Thought recognised young man's face as coming out of Mme. Pozzi's house. Went to see house—in wrong quarter. Bloomsbury, only brand new, instead of Kensington, where we now are: brown carpets, plain walls, excellent beds, no bath, no light in best room, beautiful sun and balcony in little room, looking on to courtyard where photographer prints films all day. Maria hopeful.

To A. P., *24th October.*

I have bought a house for thirty-two pounds; it is not a large house, but only two rooms and a kitchen, and it is furnished, and has electric light and gas. I have the keys and the receipt for it. I am now the woman of property. God knows I have had offers to buy the

furniture; it is not old furniture, but good and very new. I have bought it from a young man who gives a false name, and who, we hear from the porter, took the rooms for a *nid d'amour*.

I wrote a note to Arkel yesterday to say I had given up my life to go to her, and that she was planting me without a note in my throat. She received me coldly and did not allude to it, and, curiously enough, my voice was perfect to-day. She says it is suggestion —self-suggestion—which, literally translated, means imagination; but it's so unlike me to have anything imaginary or nervy.

DIARY, *2nd November*.

Made enquiries Pozzi, young man. Elite society, called Antongini; does not compare with owner of flat, Rossi. Discuss with old ladies: sad to lose us and mistrust Rossi, but think home and furniture cheap. Think shall decide on house.

3rd November.

"Rossi" came and I handed him the money—two months' allowance, seven hundred franc notes; they looked so rich. He counted them on the table and gave me key. The old ladies stared greedily round. Receipt handed over.

4th November.

Great excitement that Rossi has given me receipt for house, but not signed away his lien on the furniture.

Maria says I have been cheated. Old ladies say he is his master's chauffeur ; that they are positive they saw him drive a car. Impossible find him, as incognito. Porter at Carlo Porta says he came there with a lady very often and had tea. That he has beautiful linen which he gave her ; sometimes he didn't come for weeks. Mysterious, but still feel sure saw him at Pozzi's.

5th November.

Waited outside Pozzi's door, thinking might see him come out or go in. No.

6th November.

Waited outside again ; also asked porter name of fair young man again. Antongini—not Rossi. At last Rossi, *alias* Antongini, came out. I said : "*Pardon que je vous surprends ainsi, mais je vous ai vu passer par cette porte.*" He confused, but obviously the man. I gave him lease to sign again, and he does it with the name Rossi as before. House mine. We move there on Monday when have obtained a servant.

Studying in fun *L'Amico Fritz* and *Adrien Lecouvreur*—bad operas both.

Getting better at high notes, but can't go Italian way above F, whereas can go old way up to B. Old way not considered here. They call it falsetto.

To A. P., *6th November.*

I had such a jolly night last night with two singers —students here, Austrians. I am afraid the tall one will fall in love with me; not the little effeminate one—but he is the better singer. They will help me with my singing and cooking, and take me to plays.

Mother tells me she spoke to the Bishop of London about you. He said you must make a career first before we marry. Poor me! I shall be in my second childhood by then! There is a great vulgarity in this last phrase; "silver weddings" and "second childhoods" always seem vulgar to me, don't they to you? and what else—"Gymkhanas" and "receptions"—"tiny dance," "lukewarm water," and, I am afraid, "kedgeree," though it's your favourite dish; they go with winter garden and banjos and ferns—they bring back all my childhood to me—the sweet people I used to stay with at Hampstead. I was so happy—I am a little sorry I am not marrying into a family like them, so that I might go back to these things.

I must tell you about A.—*alias* Rossi—whom I may fall in love with if you starve me with letters. He is of rare young beauty, dressed like the most perfect sort of Lord Rocksavage, and so man of the world as to be indifferent to me.

My dear, Trench—Mr Herbert Trench—has been

at me again, and has asked me to go to London to play "Light" at the Haymarket, which, as you know, he originally asked me to do; but apparently there is a new version, and Maeterlinck has written more parts for Light called *The Palace of Happiness*. However Mme. A. says I shall lose all I have gained—which is nothing—and that's why it makes it so difficult to go. This sounds a paradox, but if my voice was well and fair and growing, I should go and do the *Blue Bird* for Christmas weeks—say six—but, as it is uneven and vacillating and fluctuating, I don't feel I have earned my return; and I don't want yet to be back, with the old door-bell going, and the telephone, and idleness. No, no, I don't! Yet there are the hungry mouths to feed, as they say, and the public to feed up, too. God knows I am an unlucky creature! I ought never to have left the old stage.[1]

My voice is bad to-night. I can't speak. Oh, blast! blast! I should like to create a Maeterlinck with my white feet. Ought I to go?

Later, 10*th November*.

Heaven knows, I have bought a house. I know the price and quantity of everything—moreover, I have acquired plate, linen, and servants, and china for six people.

[1] This is almost the only occasion when I nearly gave up.

My bed I bought from the young man; it is the very best and most luxurious—the best one can get.

It's so nice to know that every duster is mine, but it made a great hole in fifty pounds, as they say, and I am not sure—in view of the future—that it's a bit wise. It's curious how economy does away absolutely with taste. I am only buying one or two extra rugs. I have no news at all from Trench. However, I rather hope it's off.

PART II

OUR OWN HOUSE

PART II.

OUR OWN HOUSE.

To A. P., 13*th November.*

I AM settled in my house and the door is shut and the curtain down. Poor Maria has no bed till to-morrow, but the people at the porter's lodge are, luckily, bed-makers, so we can see ours being made in the courtyard next to the bad photographer with saffron-coloured hands, who washes prints in dishes. They made A——'s bed, too, which I told you was so comfortable—broad but short; just a box mattress with a frame to it—what they call here *un letto turco*, meaning divan.

Good-bye, darling. No—not yet. I must tell you I was horrid to Maria and I felt helpless and inclined to laugh, and say "Come to lunch." It was, as usual, because she was slow over jumping at conclusions and very ill, poor dear, and said she was too tired in the middle of the morning to come back to the pension for lunch, and that the portress "*m'apportera un peu de lait peutêtre*," her martyr stunt. I unfortunately lost my head, and said "Don't be silly! There's

plenty of milk in the house!" whereupon she had a terrible *crise de nerfs*, and threw cups away and leaned against the wall, and I had to leave her to go to my lesson; and when I came back in the afternoon she was nearly as bad, and said that it was because she loved me so much that if I "blesséd" (wounded) her, her love would go away from me!

I wish you had been there at the Trench discussion about which I received your telegrams. Now that all is decided, I am glad; but the three days of indecision were awful.

Fancy—fancy! that I shall see you in two months —it seems ridiculously soon. Bring me lots of warm stockings.

I have found a manufacturer of *passe-partouts* for my flower and French costume prints, but the room looks like a hotel. No one knows why; perhaps it is the lace blinds I inherited, or the bedcover, and the curtains which are of brown plush for no particular reason.

Maria is dreadfully untidy about her clothes and hangs them on pegs, which she seems to put everywhere.

Do tell C. that von Zur Muller's pupil, Hans, is such a beautiful player and singer—very Italian production, not a bit German, but he does not attract me fatally like A—— as yet.

The portress has told me all about A——; he came

every day here at four o'clock and played Beethoven and Mozart on the piano till his most beautiful lady arrived in a *vettura*. She was fair—about forty. They stayed here till seven—the same every day, for three hours for three years. No wonder he didn't love me!

Note.—What effect had this move on my work?

I think, on the whole, it was a bad move, though it gave me much more liberty, better food, and congenial surroundings instead of uncongenial. I mean that the terrible ugliness, poverty and squalor of the pension probably turned my mind from work nearly as much as the going in for making things pretty did in the new life; but still I spent much too much time in waxing the floor, and buying tea, and scraps of silk to make cushions.

The first night we were in the new apartment, I remember going round to the *salamière* for things like matches, spaghetti, and a list of things that I had been given by Maria; and I could not resist getting *compôte* of fruit, in a piece of paper, which dripped; also couldn't resist buying some bright purple paper which they use to wrap their wares in.

The furniture we had was quite inartistic but good, and I wasn't "done" or cheated; and what was really lovely was a tea service, imitation imola, with bunches of flowers on a putty-coloured background—lovely in design, too.

Another disadvantage was that the old pension was five minutes' walk from my teacher, and the new twenty minutes in a tram. My neighbours were a veterinary surgeon and his wife. The quarter was *fuori di Porta Venezia*, which apparently, as I found out after, was outside the pale of the good respectable part of the

town. It was almost the last block of houses, so very near the open country and rice-fields. I did not find this out, however, till much later.

Another thing—Maria's intense anxiety over accounts and cooking made her less able to practice, so she gradually let her own beautiful solo-playing subside, and devoted herself to playing for me only. She was wonderful in not letting me see this, and lived entirely for me.

We had a little early coffee-and-bread breakfast at eight, and then I took some time getting up, because of reading the paper, which always came two days behind, but by the eight o'clock post. I did a little work in my dressing-gown, and then at ten had a sort of second breakfast of ham or honey and bread before being packed off to my lesson. Singing makes one very hungry, especially when one is taught to depend on one's diaphragm entirely for strength of tone, which means huge breaths like a constant Sandow.

To A. P., *23rd November.*

I have come back so dead from the Certosa di Pavia, I think because I drank the best wine—nothing to do with Chartreuse itself.

It is awful about Maria. She works and works for me all day. I haven't had a bad scene since the time when she burnt her hair in the stove. I was furious and she couldn't understand why it should matter to me that her hair was burnt.

Mme. A. has suddenly plunged into the *mezzo* idea

about my voice; she says that when she sees me she sees Delilah, which makes me laugh. What would England say—slim, Northern stained-glass window *me* as Delilah! My medium notes are so lovely, but I can't get the old high B and C. My A was always fairly lovely. I can't understand Ricordi thinking I had a facility for high notes. Mme. A. says she is going to give me another month only to be a soprano. What am I to do? Knuckle under, or go to Ricordi's man instead? I don't think my voice is changed except that it is more often good than in old days.

Last night that wretch A—— was in a box opposite to where we were in the gallery. He is ridiculously attractive. After the opera, Maria and I went and stood outside the main door to see him come out. Maria said: "*Il est la! Il est la!*" I couldn't face it and rushed away—afterwards regretted it.

To A. P., 30*th November*.

My dearest,—Your old, almost dishonoured, cheque has come to me at last in the shape of lire 49 and 15 centesimi (I hope to buy a good many chickens with it—they will be already roasted; one gets them like that in a piece of paper, and warms them up at home).

Arkel is puzzled by my voice; she says it's "*molto*

originale," *soprano dramatico*, and its agility that of a *soprano leggero*. But it is imperfect in all three. If I could get all three I should be a Trilby, but it's not to be—the Italians think me so clever ; isn't it odd ? Brainy, I mean.

First of all, a few questions to answer :—

1. What is this I hear about Roosevelt being chucked, or something ?
2. What has Redmond or some one done with some money or other ?
3. If the Liberals come in will not the Lords go ? If so, why did Mr Asquith make so many Liberal Peers ?
4. Why and how did the King come from Norfolk in twenty minutes to talk to Mr Asquith and Lord Crewe ?
5. Why did Lord—I can't remember his name —(an important, rather old, man) resign his post when the Cabinet was formed ?

Your stage-struck question I can answer in one—of course Ainley *paints* his hair grey at the sides for Buckingham in *Henry VIII.*

Darling Daddy wrote the most typical letter. " What about Alan ? Perhaps as all is going well and I am coining money with Henry, I might take him as my secretary." It's so sweet, and Daddy's idea of balm for all pain. I am sure he would have offered it in

the same way to Napoleon, when deposed; he did indeed offer it to Winston, I believe.[1]

I sang so badly this morning; it is always touch and go; I think it is because I didn't try. I always must.

Now I am going to sleep—two-thirty, afternoon.

To A. P., *2nd December.*

Did you read Lloyd G. at Limehouse?[2] Did you read the wonderful, gushing, bubbling, spraying

[1] There was a moment when my father made this offer to Mr Winston Churchill, half humorously, but hoping with all his might that he'd take it.

[2] This refers to a famous speech by Mr Lloyd George, made on 22nd November 1910 to a huge audience of working men at Mile End. In his speech he made a tremendous attack on the House of Lords and the aristocracy. He asked for "equal treatment for all white men," and asserted that "no country would look at our system—no free country, I mean. France has a senate, the Colonies have senates, but they are all chosen, directly or indirectly, by the people of these countries." He went on to imagine what such new and up-to-date countries as Australia and Canada would say if Englishmen went over to them and discussed with them our House of Lords and the importance we attach to property and birth generally. "Surely," says the Englishman, "you give more votes to the owners of property than to a mere man who works for his living?" The Australian answers, "No, we want to be governed by souls, not by sods," but goes on to suggest that it might not be a bad plan for Australia to have an aristocracy. The Englishman answers, "We will tell you how we got ours. We will give you our oldest and most ancient stock, and consequently our best, because an aristocracy is like cheese—the older it gets the higher it becomes." There follows a description of the English aristocracy and its pursuits: "they have something to do with the land, but they have never cultivated it—neither they nor their ancestors. They must not do any work; they must hunt, ride, shoot—recreations of

fountain of it ? Coarse, of course, and melodramatic, but, my word ! aren't you glad to live now when things are so burning ? Could you ever plunge into politics ? But you will be the underworks of them in the Civil Service—the mole that throws up mountains, or removes them, as the case may be.

Darling, it is a pity you have bought my Christmas present, as I wanted to wait for you to buy me the édition de luxe of *Boccaccio*—just come out here—wonderful modern illustrations. I should say it cost a good twenty pounds, but still we might ask the price, as it were.

I never have known anything so tantalising as your letters are. Mostly, of course, you write about ourselves, but when you write about important things you always do it like this :

" After Lloyd George's Mile End speech and my talk with Winston and the Bishop of London, I caught the six train home." Or " When I came back from the fire at His Majesty's, I felt hungry and ate a ham sandwich." Or " Thank God my interview with Sandow is over ! "

that sort." To this the Colonial is imagined to retort, " Here, rather than be governed by men like that, we would have a senate of kangaroos." Lloyd George ended his speech with a more personal attack on the House of Lords : " This system is like the sort of thing I saw in London when they first used electric trams—it is just like an old horse-tram and the electric cars on the same track. It ends in blocking the traffic."

About Sandow and your breathing, 395 is a big blow—yes, Plunket Greene's record being 410. But I think it's because air won't pass quickly into your lungs at all.

I had a great fit of misery to-day, knowing full well what it would be like if you came—the half-shyness, half-beauty of our first few minutes together, and then the rather tiresome day of explaining new places and peasants to you, and the wretchedness of your going again.

V. T. TO A. P., *6th December.*

I have cried so much to-day over my voice and been so utterly alone! That dwarf, Hans, has got an engagement to sing "Butterfly" at Trieste, so I shall hate him from jealousy and not be able to ask him to play my accompaniments.

It is Sunday, and I have been to church at the Duomo; a clever priest preached on Socialism, then quite suddenly vanished and reappeared in gold, and swung censers and chanted; it seems as if what he said belongs to our Lord, and what he did belonged to the Dark Ages when people thought the earth was flat.

I think the *Morning Post* is a rather good paper for me to have because I see the leading articles against us and then our own side's[1] wonderful speeches on the top of it.

[1] By "our own sides," I meant Mr Asquith's—knowing nothing of politics. I did and always shall follow him blindly.

You will have heard that Mother has offered me the choice to come home for ten days or her to come here for ten days. The first I receive with scorn ; I should be terrified of not getting back here. I hope she will come here. Mme. Arkel gives no holidays ; I am also *abonnée* to the classical concert society here and they are giving the Bach *St Matthew Passion*, Bussoni and Gerhardt and Rosé quartette, and wonderful things, but these are not known here—only to a very few élite musical people.

To A. P., 13*th December*.

You don't think it selfish of me, for Mother and Daddy's sake, not to come back, do you ?

You needn't have told me that Maggie Teyte was accompanied by Beecham—I hoped to be the first to have that privilege. How does she do Melisande—well ?

Later.

Arkel is still furious, but she said : " *On pourrait faire de vous quelquechose d'exceptionel si vous aviez seulement cette chose qu'il vous manque*," pointing to the forehead. I suppose she means concentration of mind, as she has already told me I have brains. I feel you can help me with this—it's more on the right lines, isn't it ? because I must be exceptional or nothing, as compared

to middling artists. As Daddy would say, "I couldn't do it so well but I couldn't do it so badly." I am either far better or far worse.

I had a long telegram from Tosti saying he would be here soon; and I am dreading it for my singing's sake, and am quickly learning Tosca things. It's so funny, the minute one gets more dramatic force, the nuances go so easily, and it makes it difficult to sing with charm and "eggspresseon," as Fraulein S. used to say, though easy to sing with enthusiasm or joy.

Hans is rather in love with me, I think, but too wrapped up in his work to be sad; he is, on the contrary, very, very happy.

To A. P., 15*th December.*

I must tell you about Hans; you'll like him so much —he is so absolutely good and like a child—sort of St John with lambs, like in pictures. I played with his affections rather crudely at first, I fear, but now I am so nice and good, and grown-up, because he is in love with me. Maria said he was bound to be, and I said "No."

I have not opened your presents, but put them under the sofa for Christmas Day.

(Will you ask Mother to bring my paint-box and four Dolly dyes of brilliant hues?)

Hans calls me "My dear, good Kundry," because of

Parsifal, you know; I call him "Parsifal"! He is rather foolish but, of course, a terribly good musician, and he kisses my hand very, very rarely. He does not know about you, naturally; he only knows that my heart is full of love, and that lots of people love me. We play the "analogies" game—you know, giving people a flower, and a book, and a musician, etc. This is what he gave me:—Flower, an enormous red rose with a thick stalk with thorns in it. (He then gave me) musical instrument, harp. Animal, milk punch. Stone, transparent marble. Musician, Gluck! (because he says it is not really music, and I am not really fundamentally musical). Poet, Byron, and a German man whom I don't know.

What do you think? Isn't it very odd, and unlike the usual buttercup, pan-pipes, doe, etc., that I am generally given?

I gave him bluebells—he is blue, absolute, obvious blue, as you are obvious purple—then I gave him beer, cock robin, Christina Rossetti.

Maria is fighting in your interest, but she thinks there is no danger in Hans.[1]

[1] I evidently spoke Italian quite well at this stage, for there follows a very long letter in Italian, to say that I had lost all interest in English politics, because I never had a paper, begging A. P. to send me the *Morning Post*, and telling him that my rooms were decorated with laurel trees, and branches of laurel. I remember tying oranges on to them—which was quite a new idea in those days.

To A. P., *23rd December.*

Mother comes the day after to-morrow. I am in desperate straits about my voice; all these ten years of singing [1] don't seem to have given control. My God! Shall I always fall short? Look at me. No, don't. I am so "wracked and tortured since last I lost thee!" and as to my singing, all the old despondencies and dreads of the future are back upon me. It is like—can you imagine?—being given an unlimited number of bricks and being told to build a thing like the Coliseum at Rome. First one would say, "What about mortar?" And they would answer, "Here is powder, and here is water, and that makes mortar. But you must first knock down the houses to make room for the new building." Oh darling, it's so like that, and Tosti saying that in six months I might have "*une énorme voix*," in six months! And I hope to be even with Edvina and Maggie Teyte. It seems so tragic. Oh, my dear, help me, criticise me, have I the stability? Look at my hand-writing! Are you going to be a strong rock and keep me on the line and straighten me?

I seriously do not think that I sing as attractively as Maggie Teyte, but my voice will be bigger and fiercer. Tosti still says I'm too *molle*, too *comme il faut*,

[1] I had started to learn very early, and my voice was quite grown-up by the time I was twelve.

but that I am improved, more human and attractive and beautiful since I was here, but I told him that I had been like that for two years. Of course it's always been a sore subject, I've been mediocre in Tosti's eyes.

DIARY, *Christmas Eve.*

When I came home after heavy Christmas shopping with Hans Lisman and his friend, a tall guardsman, studying baritone (Viennese), I found Tosti had called. Terrible excitement. Dashed out to find him. Conceived the wild idea of asking him to dinner. Von H. and Hans came with me. He went to a shop where there were small roasted birds, and we bought a few of those. We then tore off to Tosti's hotel—the Hotel de Ville—on the Corso Venezia. Found, of course, that he could not dine; but there he was, very sweet and debonaire, with a huge cigar.[1] I nudged the

[1] Those who never saw or knew Sir Paolo Tosti missed a great deal. He looked like an extremely kind satyr. His face was an even pink, like a *La France* rose; he had an absolutely snow-white beard, and beautiful hair, white also; very prominent eyelids, which shot out from arched brows, and a mouth never closed, but always in an attitude of singing or smiling, just closed enough to hold his cigar which never left it, even when singing. He was extremely *soigné*, more so than any man I have ever seen except one, and dressed to the last degree, preferably in rather gay summer flannels. I gave him a wide ribbon of pink and blue checks, which he admired enormously, on this very Christmas, and he had it made into a faultless tie. I suppose he was short and fat, but not short enough or fat enough to interfere with his enormous charm, which was one of courtesy, combined with

boys, who faded away, rightly, as Tosti was very shocked at my going about in Italy with men. Explained that Maria was preparing dinner. He, reassured, drove me back to my *appartamento* in a *vettura* (a one-horse fly). First time since in Milan this great luxury. Tosti admired, though mistrustfully, frugal apartment; the small room, pale green, was then the sitting-room. Tosti sat down immediately, and played "Vissi d'Arte" from *Tosca*. Maria went mad at his playing; I was naturally quivering. He was appreciative, but mimicked me; said I stiffened my under-lip, and shut my eyes, which, he said, already looked short-sighted, because of my cream-coloured eyelashes. We made appointments for Christmas Day. And he left me in a blaze of hope, fear, glory, etc.

Diary, *Christmas Day.*

Received good presents, a Sevres bacchanalian cup from the H.'s—modern, but fun. From Lady Jekyll, a blue comb made of feathers, such as I have never seen the like—"For your corn-coloured hair." Wore my long and curious chain on my black dress. Tosti came, and took me through three of his songs—"Quando

sensual ease. He had a rasping voice, but the most exquisite diction. He had no conceit about his accomplishments or his music, because his judgment was infallible; he just knew, and so knew himself.

cadran le foglie," "M'han detto," "Padiglione." Persuaded him by force to drive me to Mme. Arkel's partly to show off, and partly because I wanted him to hear me at my best.

To A. P., *Christmas Day.*

My dear Heart,—Christmas Day has been a terribly exciting day. Tosti telegraphed at four to say would I dine with him, as he was only here for me for a few hours. Maria was with me. First we went to Arkel's and he made me sing there. He says quite a different voice, and big and all; still the actual singing badish, rough, the mouth ugly when I sing. God! I felt an owl!

He adores Maggie Teyte as a singer more than anyone at the moment.

Then, of course, at dinner he said that I had a beautiful figure, but that I was *gauche* all the time. All this is rather difficult.

Do you remember at Brancaster, when you told M. M.[1] that Miss Tree's wild voice was the most lovely thing that you had ever heard? Do you think that we can make it sound wild again together, when the training is more complete?

[1] Marjorie Manners, now Lady Anglesey.

To A. P., *27th December.*

Mother has come, bringing me a letter from you. I have scraped acquaintance with the aristocracy here —the Volpes, who have a most beautiful *palazzo.*

Don't forget that all presents for me must be sent off now, or they won't reach. I haven't let Cobden Sanderson send you the book, as the binding alone without tooling is to be five pounds, and I felt that it would be for our rich days. I think it is a simply glorious price for a binding, quite a bad binding.[1]

We are at Santa Margarita, at the Hotel Verdi, seeing Max.[2] He leads an ideal life, amongst orange trees and olives, and can now pick his own gardenia for his button-hole. Florence, his wife, is an amazing woman, manages everything perfectly. His little studio on the terrace is more like a captain's look-out house on a ship, and his working materials are all so ship-shape, always six pencils, perfectly sharpened, and the cream-laid foolscap he always used is there as usual.

[1] Mr Cobden Sanderson, who bound the exquisite edition of *Tristan and Isolde*, afterwards presented it to me on my wedding, signed. Needless to say, the binding is miraculous.

[2] Everyone will know that I am speaking of my Uncle, Mr Max Beerbohm, the writer and caricaturist, who never seems older than me; one with whom I had and always shall have the greatest fun—but the carefulness and beauty of his work fill me with awe—and he makes me feel common clay.

I feel illish because, of course, just as Mother came I got a real cold in the head. I am a little depressed about it, as I only got it from being out with Tosti in the terrible mist after singing in the heat, and having no tea. All my looks have gone; however, it was fortunate that they were there when he came. Mother is so sweet, but rather expecting me to come home, or to marry, or to sing, instead of lingering here.[1]

To A. P., *5th January* 1911.

First of all, to get it over . . . the anarchist.[2] You must write to the papers and say what a disgraceful

[1] I did not write much as of course the great topic—my voice—had stood still during my holiday with Mother. It was a great change for me, the comfort and luxurious hotel life, and being looked after and put to bed by Mother, as only my particular mother could.

Felicity fell ill with some childish ailment, and of course Maria and I gave up our two rooms to her and to Mother. We went to the Veterinary Surgeon's next door, but picnicked amusingly in the "living-room" unless my Mother took me out to luxurious Cova or the amusing Biffi.

My habits of forcing people to live my life, and to do things my way (still in evidence, I fear) must have been rather a bore to Mother, and I have often thought since of everyone who visited me there; but I thought myself thrilling—compensation enough!

[2] This refers to a fight between two supposed anarchists and the police, assisted by the military, which took place on 4th January in Sidney Street, in the East End. The two criminals barricaded themselves into a house and kept the police at bay by firing from seven in the morning until two in the afternoon. The affair ended with the house bursting into flames, and the men being burnt to death inside it.

lot the poorer bourgeoisie are—I suppose I mean the lower middle classes—and how they ought to be lifted out of their slough of ignorance and cruelty. I wrote to Eddie and said that I could never forgive him.[1] But he will not understand. Oh! if you ever have power in governing, make for no killing, no wars, no violence. If they had reasoned with those men, instead of burning their wretched, splendid bodies—but that's all too late.

And now about my voice, for the sixteenth time. Does not criticism affect your faith in me? You see Maria says I shall never know the base of singing, and the base of rhythm. Personally, I think I have rhythm, but I am losing what used to be called the sympathetic timbre—like a thrush. Another thing I dread is time; shall I be given time? I don't want to sing in England for perhaps three or four years. Is this a shock to you? I mean I never want to sing as a second-rate there again, but to come as a blow. I am sort of challenging my critics all the time. At Queen's Hall I sang, with a small but good voice, *Louise*. At the Bechstein Hall I showed talent, but sang badly. At Clara Butt's concerts I rather did for myself. In *Euridice* with Marie Brema, though I was admired, I seemed to

Mr Winston Churchill, then Home Secretary, came down to the scene with the police officials, and stood in the line of fire, making suggestions as to what should be done.

[1] Edward Marsh, private secretary to Winston Churchill, who was then Home Secretary.

myself a pretty good fool. Next time I appear, will they be brave enough (the public) to acknowledge that I surprise them ?

To A. P., *7th January.*

Hans is a great disappointment. He has gone off for six weeks to sing at Trieste, and places, the tenor part in *Boris Godounov*, with a famous man, he says, a bass called Chaliapin. He never tried to see me or say good-bye. Ten days' separation did it, and he was afraid of the infection from poor Felicity, who had chicken-pox. No man has ever chucked me before, not even Hugh when I have tried to be abominable. I suppose it would do me a terrible amount of good if you chucked me. You may still; one never knows with men, I suppose. Mother wants you here, to run to the chemist's, and take me out for walks. But don't you come.[1]

To A. P., *17th January.*

You and my voice go hand in hand, and when my voice goes up, you are up with it.

[1] My mother still considered A. P. as a child, and she never took our proposed engagement seriously at all at this stage, and though she had quite unworldly ambitions, she could not visualise with happiness, privation or poverty for me, though she was in all my time of absence an elevated and charming companion to A. P. My father, on the other hand, approved any honourable courtship; I think he had a secret terror that I would not "get off."

What about this? "Madame Viola Tree will take a year's rest." What that would mean to us both ten years hence! How we would seize every minute and use it! Your holiday would be from August to November; from the first of the days my hand would never leave yours, I should not see a soul outside you. We should have money, yes, money for fur coats each, and a *train de luxe* to Sicily, and there we could get out and go to the nearest *albergo*, because I should not like the responsibilities of a villa.

Oh, I don't know what I want! Hans has written, begging me to be friendly again, but calling me a capricious, proud, jealous creature. Why am I so wicked?

To A. P., *23rd January*.

I had a goodish letter from Patrick,[1] trying to take up lost threads. I feel so depressed, as if I shouldn't get on; my only happy ideas are to plan how we are to get off together, when you come. Maria never leaves this house, and I suppose if we go to the country together, you and I, she will never leave my room.

My dear, of course, about *Œdipus*,[2] I am thrilled at

[1] Patrick Shaw Stewart.

[2] *Œdipus Rex* was evidently being talked of by my father. There was obviously no translation of this play that my father thought suitable for stage presentation. Martin Harvey presented it later at Covent Garden. My father saw Monnet Sully's production.

the idea of your translating it. God knows I don't want to bother you about it, but if it would not take too much of your time to finish an act, couldn't you just, and let my father read it ? It would be lovely for our own satisfaction. After all, failing with Daddy never matters, as so many Gilbert Murrays and Swinburnes, and Tennysons have failed before you. Well, I won't say anything more about it, as you seem to be in a fair way to making an honest living now—going off to Paris and all.[1] You must tell me about your work there. Of course, I don't ask about it much now, I only know that you read thin little green books that I don't understand, and then compare them to thick little black books.

The great thing about those classical plays is that they are too drawly and spiritless. One wants then to knock a spark out at each word, and then they would be all right.

I have a Battoluzzi print for you here. It may be worth three pounds or twenty. Perhaps we had better make no enquiries. Anyhow it is hand-coloured.

I don't want you here : in the first place, I can never get away ; in the second place, Maria would be here ; and in the third place, I can't and won't be a singer !

[1] A. P. had gone to Paris to learn French at the pension of a lady named Jeanne de Hénaut, on whom Harold Nicolson has written a charming little brochure, published privately.

and I am perhaps coming home and giving it up. It is too difficult, and too expensive ; in the fourth place, what's the use of a singer who has to have influenza from habit once every year, and catarrh and all the rest of it ?

Why don't you write about seeing my father and mother, and all those interesting things ?

My dear, when I had your gentle present which made me laugh rather sweetly, I thought it was going to be my letters in book form ; but no—and I have worn the necklace with some success. But the cotton broke in eighteen places, and the beautiful drops were scattered far and wide, luckily in the house.

Last night I went to hear a good singer, half Maggie Teyte, half Ruth Vincent. The people here are mad about her, but trust Milan for hitting upon the most inartistic thing and liking it. They like her because she is fresh and proper, and never travels without her father and brother. Her real name is Lucrezia Borgia, and she is descended from the last-named, but she calls herself " Bori." [1]

[1] I heard Bori sing in a Mozart opera, in *Romeo and Juliet* by Gounod, *The Children of the King*, and the first performance of *Rosenkavalier*—all at La Scala. Ricordi had enormous hopes of her, said that she was a born lyric artist.

A. P. to V. P., *26th January.*

Rue de la Pompe, Paris.

The woman herself is a wonderful creature, sort of forty-ish, beautiful though she wears a wig; her French is the most wonderful thing I ever heard; the most musical thing, a deep voice and always speaking very clearly and even slowly—marvellously dignified manners; her one and only idea is, strange to say, this examination, more especially the Foreign Office and Diplomatic, and if one deviates a minute from the appointed hours she not only notices but condemns very plainly.

The hours are: breakfast (by ourselves), 8.30; work 9–12.30 (usually a lesson with her in the morning. I haven't had one yet); lunch 12.30; outside from 2–3.30; work, 3.30–4.30; tea, 4.30; work, 5–7; dinner, 7; work, 8.30–12. So you see she's got ideas on the subject, and is intent on keeping up her record. It is just a flat on the top floor in quite a pleasant part of Paris—sort of Bayswater, I suppose, though closer to Park Lane than that. Perhaps you know where it is already.

Such things as the beds one no doubt gets accustomed to soon. Food goodish, no, unpretending, absolutely, but it's quite good. You hate this sort of letter, don't you? You never saw anything like her

mother who lives here. The same courtly manners hidden under a veil of dirt and grime so thick that the human eye can hardly pierce it. She has one eye, and a heavy moustache, and hands like a vulture. She can't be a day younger than eighty. When Jeanne has half-finished her cigarette she hands it to the old woman who finishes it.

To A. P., *29th January*.

I will wait till you come for the books, and it will be lovely to read them with you. I shall want a lot of help as I find D'Annunzio difficult. As usual you introduce *Il Fuoco*—as who should say *The Newcomes* by a man called William M. Thackeray. I read all of *Il Fuoco* when I was twelve in English, but understood not a word.

Tosti told me that D'Annunzio had given him as a present the letter that Duse wrote to him when she first read *Il Fuoco*, and broke her heart.[1] I should like to see it.

Yes, my singing is wonderful to-day, but I am entirely put off my balance by :—(*a*) Letty's wedding [2] —jewels, wealth, honour, power (as Mrs Brown Potter said in *The Three Musketeers*); and by (*b*)

[1] It will be remembered that D'Annunzio wrote *Il Fuoco* about Elenora Duse, and I think she begged him not to publish it.

[2] The second daughter of Violet, Duchess of Rutland.

Aunty Con saying: "Won't you come home for the Coronation Season? Haven't you learnt enough?" and by (*c*) Mrs Visetti saying: "When are you coming back to us? I hope you will have an appearance soon!"

How I long to give up sometimes. But I am sure this is the only place to learn in. I hate life. I suppose by October I shall have just an inkling of where, how, and with whom I am to spend the rest of my poor little life—at present I have none. Every day I hate more and more the idea of returning home; yet it is where I ought to be.

To A. P., *8th February*.

I can't tell you how much I love you and your fresh letters. Write to me often and always about your life.

I am for the moment physically sick over *Forse che si, forse che non*, by D'Annunzio, which I have been reading. I would not have read it for the world, yet some pages are so beautiful, and I know I am capable of feeling ill. Some of it is sickening, but the end is so sane and clear.

I think that if you come alone, everything will be easyish. We can go to the shore of a lake from Saturday till Monday. Last night *Il Matrimonio Segreto* at

the Scala, and the night before *Sappho* with La Burzio —a rather splendid woman, but the worst music you ever heard.

Later.

I am simply in anguish, life is so awful, and I am not a bit healthy-minded any more. Every man I see makes me quite sick for want of love, and then I read D'Annunzio. I am at this minute at Mme. Arkel's. I burst out crying at my own voice, so that she has sent me away from my lesson. It's so cruel, my voice was so glorious and brilliant this morning. I am mad, I think—madish. What are you talking about not coming in the spring ? I have had enough of this letter, quite enough.

Well, now my head is aching—good-bye.

To A. P., *12th February.*

I have a new friend called Cesare Lodvici. He brings me violets and narcissus. He is a little like you, only Jewish.

Later.

I have had such a tiresome experience. The boy like you has tried to make love to me on the stairs ; I think he is too young to be drunk, only mistaken and tiresome. I confided in Maria, who said that

I ought to have "giffled him"—in common English, boxed his ears. But this is absolutely not possible to me. Now she says that I must write and forbid him the house. This also seems to me difficult and egotistical because, as I said to her, "What is more natural than what he did? What else could he do but try?" Doesn't this seem to you right reasoning? However, Maria is going to manage it now.

Do you realise the importance of coming here in spring when it is hot? although I want you soon with all my soul. Did you read in Mr Asquith's first speech in the House that he used Violet Asquith's expression, "things like," only he used it in relation to things like Free Trade! And I suppose "Wait and see" was practically my expression "No one knows."

To A. P., *22nd February*.

Maria is going to send us off to the country alone for three days when you come. She says she refuses to be with me when you are there. Say what you feel. Oh, it is nearly a month hence. I am "*tutta tremante*" as Dante says. It will be better if you get out at the Lago Maggiore station, as it's two hours nearer you. Wait till you are absolutely satisfied about your work. How can I be so excited?

Photo. by Hills & Saunders.]

[*To face p.* 80.

To A. P., *23rd February*.

You fool, you fool, the Rosé quartette comes here soon. You must come for that. Also Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion*, for the first time to Milan. Tell Tommy the choir is coming from Leipsig.

Tell me everything you do and say with Jeanne, and if you are getting to be the favourite, or if Bunt's [1] blond moustaches, or if Tommy's secret smile hold the sway—no one knows. If you talk little in English, how much less will you talk in French ? Tell Tommy I cannot but love him. Poor Ribblesdale may, I think, have to have his leg cut off.[2] Isn't it terrible, that glorious creature, so splendidly made. Don't say, as, of course, it may not be true. If I thought that he cared for me enough for it to make any difference, I would go to England to be with him—his *coupe d'oubli*, as he called me.

I am now trying to read a boring classic—*I Promessi*

[1] Alan Lascelles, grandson of Lord Harewood, cousin of Lord Lascelles, studying for the Foreign Office in Paris. "Bunt" Goschen —Gerard Goschen, the son of Sir Edward Goschen, our Ambassador at Berlin at the opening of the Great War.

[2] Lord Ribblesdale had a fall out hunting—it was his second bad accident. The horse got his foot in the top rail of the gate, and Lord R. broke his leg, but he did not have to lose it, as Sir Arbuthnot Lane riveted it, and he was lame for about a year, but afterwards returned to his glorious gait, and to his activity till his last and great illness in 1922. He died in 1925 after a long illness and amazing endurance of suffering.

Sposi—difficult after the extremely simple white light of D'Annunzio.

Last night I went out with the veterinary surgeon and his wife, my neighbours, to see the Fair. He was, of course, the lion-tamer's best friend, and introduced me. I think that it is the first time that I have shaken hands with a lion-tamer. I have never even seen one before. He was cruel to the leopard, though, who scratched his cheek.

There is a book here called *The Lamp-Lighter*; I think that you ought to make it into a play. It is a good story, and wants to be a kind of melo-ish drama. Ideas, yes, original ideas one must have, then one can make a good play. You notice that Barrie's and Pinero's plays, however well written, always aim for ideas first.

To A. P., *26th February*.

My voice is glorious and I want you to hear it, also I think that you must come to Mme. Arkel's with me, and thank her on both knees—no, not quite, but with both hands. She must be a pretty good genius to do what so many have failed at.

I can't think why you did not have faith in my voice. I hate all those who have not had faith. She says that in five years, when I am *venti cinque* or *venti sei*, I can study Brünhilde, because I should be as wonderful as her. Yes, old fish, you will have your woman

singing that old *Salome* before many years have elapsed —which fulfils the saying of Sir Charles Stanford— " She will be the Brünhilde of the future."

To A. P., *27th February.*

Shall I have to go back for the Coronation and Daddy's gala performance ? [1] He will be sad if I am not there. When is it, July or March ? You can't think how I dread it, now that my life is absolutely unhinged from anything but singing and making yours and my life. You are absolutely mistaken in thinking that I haven't a good life here. I have—full of jolly things, and people, and concerts and operas. Not for one second have I missed one soul except you, and perhaps Ribblesdale, a little—yes.

Of course it is sad, but too wonderful,[2] that you are not well. However, you must think. Saturday morning you had better arrive, as I can't miss my lesson on

[1] The Shakespeare Festival given for the Coronation.

[2] It is a tragedy in reading this to know what opportunities such as are given to very few I missed, or partly missed, through fussiness, and through a kind of false conscientiousness about my work. It would not have hurt the world had I delayed the training of my voice for a few days, and here was the " time and the place and the loved one all together," and I was constantly thinking of " chaperonage " and my teacher's anger. Chaperonage is only a convention or protection, and merely puts the third person in a false or difficult position.

The reference to my gladness to hear that A. P. was ill, meant that it would enable him to make it the excuse for coming south, as he was very delicate then and had frequent attacks of bronchitis.

Friday, as I have missed one to-day. If it were the first night of *Rosenkavalier* should I send you a telegram to come Sunday? We would go straight up after my lesson on Saturday to listen—either the Sacro Monte at Varese, a very high pointed mountain top, with a little church on the summit and a little village against the church; or to Pallanza, low and sheltered on the Lago Maggiore. Which suits your health best—Tatsfield, as it were, or Tandridge? [1] They are about the same distance from each other, but the first is gloriously inaccessible; lots of sun, but, I should think, the remains of snow on the highest peaks. I am afraid I cannot stay longer than Tuesday at latest. We could go to Monza—the sort of Versailles. You see it is very impossible for me to take many days off singing when my voice is so good, and I feel that the time at Rappallo took me a week further from my goal. If you feel by Friday either too ill or too well to come mind you say.

To A. P., *2nd March.*

Isn't it a wonderful thing—this is my last letter and that there is no need in it for tenderness, only to tell you to come here well and strong and bring endless D'Annunzio and your own lesson-books to read together, as we must get through the day somehow. I

[1] Tatsfield was the parish of A. P.'s father—then Tandridge, a beautiful old church near it in Kent.

think that I have perhaps made a fatal mistake in getting Maria's swain to come with her to the country, but it was my usual misplaced unselfishness, not wanting her to feel out of it. But he is not her real young man, and she may feel bored. You could go to the Pension Wyss, as it is not very far, and you will only want it for the night. Or would you like to stay with the veterinary surgeon ?—no bath there. If you arrive at nine there will still be time for you to come here to have breakfast, and even a flat-bottomed bath before I go. There is no need to tell you how I want you to come. Nothing must spoil it—not even endless rows with friends, nor endless streams of lessons for hours on end, nor tea, nor the bell. You are not to grouse, nor make me put visitors off. Because you will have a day and night of Liberty, from which the large single red roses takes it's name. I feel like *Le Rire* and *Le Sourire*, and not a bit like *Pelleas and Melisande ; Le Sourire*, with perhaps a touch of *Hero and Leander*—they were so jolly.

My heavens ! We will drink Asti—the only wine in the world for me—white Asti. I will write down " all these thy laws in my heart."

From Memory.

On the night before A. P. was due to arrive, Maria and I went to the " Veglione " which consists of a masked ball at the Scala Opera House. Maria had a

beautiful domino of shot green-and-gold taffeta; I looked not so good in a black one. We walked home with our cavaliers, I suppose Von H—— and Hans, at three oclock in the morning. At five A. P. knocked at the Porter's Lodge, but I slumbered and slept. The next thing I remembered was that I was roused by Maria making me get up so that A. could have a bath in "the bedroom," while we prepared breakfast in the living-room. He was sad not to be met, but I contrarily thought it my duty to go to the "Veglione." The next evening we went on a voyage of discovery to Sacro Monte, one of the most beautiful places in the world, described in a not well-known passage by Addison. The Pilgrim Road curls up the mountain with chapels in its path, and we found a lovely little *albergo*, called the Tre Colonne, right on its summit. I then telephoned to Maria, who rather unwillingly arrived.

From H. B. T. to V. T., *2nd March.*

All Souls' Place.

Darling Viola,—For a long time past I have been promising myself the treat of writing to you, and telling you all about the world and things from my point of view—but something has always stayed my hand.

I sent you the £10 because I had a sudden feeling

that you might be stinting yourself of little luxuries. I will add another £2 to your weekly allowance, that will perhaps enhance your happiness.

Do tell me all about yourself and Alan, that I may know exactly what attitude to take up in regard to him. Are you now engaged ? And do you think of marrying soon ? I rejoice to hear that your voice has grown audibly, and long to hear you sing. If I cannot come out to you, you must come to London soon, my darling. I think it fine of you to stick to your work, but you must be seen sometimes. There is a chance of my having a little holiday when *Midsummer Night's Dream* is produced, and I should like to come to you if possible.

They think it a bad thing for the play that I should be out of it ; but I imagine it will be sufficiently attractive without me.

I am almost sure to get Phyllida Terry for the Festival (for Viola and Portia). I am not sure she is wanted for *Midsummer*, which has a most attractive cast. The little boy who plays Puck is wonderful ! All still goes well with Henry VIII. All my debts are paid, and I shall have about £10,000 over. How wonderful !

I don't think I told you of the wonderful present the Company gave me on the 1st January—eight silver plates—and they made beautiful speeches which left me speechless. Then we missed you at the rejoicing dinner one Sunday. You should have heard the fun —it was an enormous success.

I was greatly amused at your description of the advanced lighting of operas in Milan. You see, they don't need to show the faces of the singers (nor often the figures either) in opera, so they can put all the lights at the back, and I am employing this trick in *Macbeth*. But the system is quite inappropriate when facial expression is important, and I think our *Macbeth* production will be really interesting.

I am glad about Tosti, and mind you sing to Ricordi. (Glor*i*ous, dear, not glor*e*ous.) Yes, all other people are conceited about their art. I suppose you read Reinhardt in the *Morning Post*. But the *Morning Post* is always unfavourable to me, and altered his high praise of me into no praise. He himself was furious.

I will try and write again to-morrow, but to-day you have most of my news. Your loving father,

HERBERT TREE.

I have not told enough of the place where Alan and I first saw the beauty of Italy together. The legend of its being a place for lovers is as old as its hills. This Sacred Mountain with its " Pilgrim's Walk," its chapels as milestones, and its great church on the very top, seemed to have an extra meaning and beauty as we climbed to our goal. In those days the funicular only went half-way up the mountain, so one *had* to climb the " Pilgrim's Way."

As we got to the village there were goats wandering in and out of the little houses like cats, and in our Hotel (the Colonne) the windows of our rooms looked east and west—his towards the setting sun and Monte Rosa, mine over the plains and lakes. These last from that height seemed small silver plates on a large green dinner-table. We walked along the ridge which bridged this little mountain to one of the other lesser Alps, spent our day in the sun—which was amazing, considering the snow had not gone, and there were snowdrops in the crevices. It got dark early, and we worked hard at *Otello*, the opera I was then studying; some of these phrases will always stick in my mind as belonging to this period. It was only a short two days, as I, as usual like a fool, fretted for my work.

This is a description of the place by Samuel Butler:—

"Shortly after the sixth chapel has been passed, the road turns a corner, and the town on the hill comes into full view. This is a singularly beautiful spot; the chapels are worth coming a long way to see, but this view of the town is better still. We generally like any building that is on the top of a hill—it is an instinct in our nature to do so . . . From the moment of its bursting upon one to on turning the corner near the seventh, or Flagellation Chapel, one cannot keep one's eyes off it, and fancies that it becomes better and better with every step one takes. . . .

"We happened by good luck to be at the Sacro Monte during one of the great *feste* of the year, and saw I am afraid to say how many thousands of pilgrims go up and down; they were admirably behaved, not one of them tipsy. There was an old English gentleman at the Hotel Riposo who told us that there had been another such *feste* not many weeks previously, and that he had seen one drunken man there—an Englishman—who kept abusing all he saw and crying out 'Manchester's the place for me!'"

PART III

FROM A. P.'S GOING TILL MY RETURN, INCLUDING A VISIT TO RICHARD STRAUSS

PART III.

FROM A. P.'S GOING TILL MY RETURN, INCLUDING A VISIT TO RICHARD STRAUSS.

To A. P., 14*th March*.

DARLING,—No one knows what it is to have lived practically under the same roof as you for a fortnight, and then to lose you. I never expect to find you, and never look for you; I know too well that you are gone. I know that you will have started your work with new goodwill and eagerness, knowing that I am at the other end of it for you. It's odd to think that you, after all, are my first male visitor to this place, and that the others will be, as it were, water off a duck's back! It was funny the way Maria never understood a word you said.

I wrote a long letter to Daddy, trying to draw up some plan of action. When I know twelve operas Arkel will let me go.

I know: (1) *Lohengrin;* (2) *Tannhäuser* (Venus and Elizabeth); (3) *Mephistopheles* (Marguerite and Helen); (4) *Tosca*, more or less; (5) *Bohème*, more or less.

Oh, A.! I suppose the rest won't take me more

than three months. I think that I must learn the *Fanciulla del West*, however awful it is.

Bless your dear eyes, it's only time I fear if you come again. I feel that from henceforth you must rivet on the exam. Maria loves you so, and Arkel thinks you were *musicista*, and asked, with a glint in her eyes, why I was more nervous singing before you than before Tosti. Write Maria a long letter, thanking her for her kindness to you.

From Memory.

A. P. stayed, I think, at a small hotel in the same home as our friend Von H—— for the second part of his stay. I used to go to my lesson every day—and he waited outside; then we would go to Savioni's and Biffi's to eat—or, if we were feeling extra poor, home by tram to cheese and real wine.

We heard together the first night (I suppose one of the greatest occasions in musical history), indeed the first performance, barring the Munich one, of Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*.

We had heard from those who were anti all German operas, except Wagner, that it would be *un fiasco*, which was the first time I had heard the word used by an Italian—though it was always used by the English as an expression for any disaster.

The first act went warmly, for no Italian, however banal, could fail to hear the beauty of the orchestration

—the tenor aria was indeed cheered and repeated—the boy Octavian divinely sung by Lucrezia Bori; the second act where they started the famous waltz, people fairly howled it down—they thought Strauss was making fun of them. "*Che Porcheria!*" they cried, almost spitting. The third act with all its spicy interweaving and double orchestra was hooted—but at the end of it the duet was encored; so that by the time Strauss took his call they were cheering madly. He just shrugged his shoulders at them. A. P. and I adored it all through, and it became at once, and still is, and will be, our favourite opera.

Quotation from part of a Letter from my Mother.[1]

My darling Girl,—I have had two such happy and illumined letters from you and Alan to-day. I can't bear to think that by now he has gone. But perhaps sunshine has persuaded him to another week—I hope so! I love his overwhelming praise and glory in your singing, darling. It seems too good to be true that he hears notes that were never heard on land or sea!—and God knows *Alan* knows a beautiful and wonderful thing.

On the day he went back, or perhaps the day he came, A. P. heard me sing at my lesson, first sitting outside

[1] Unfortunately, though my remembrance tells me that she wrote nearly every day, all Mother's brilliant and gentle letters at this time have been lost.

in the garden of the Castello, when my voice in *Otello*, which I was studying, floated out through the window.[1] Then he was invited up into the rather terrifying presence of Mme. Arkel herself.[2]

To A. P., *17th March.*

I send you mother's letter, darling. I must tell you that I never mentioned you to her in my letters, except to say that you had come, and then that you had gone. I am staying in bed to see if I can't get rid of this cold. Ricordi is back, and I must sing to him. Why, in Heaven's name, did we not stay at Varese? If our honeymoon-to-be is anywhere in Italy, do let's go there. But all this is when you pass your examination. I think that I must write to Eddie again, to keep him hot against the day of your entering the Home Office. Work, do! Not slowly, but passionately, like Charles would. Work as if wolves were at your back. That thing done, you can soon leave it, only, for God's sake, get it done.

Once married, I could write such wonderful, passionate letters to Clementine Churchill. "Madam, you who are already a mother know what it is to have on one's hands an idle husband, willing to work, but prevented through drink and ill-health. If you could ask Mr Churchill to

[1] A. P., when recalling this day, says my voice was never so good before or since.

[2] Pupil of Verdi, with whom she had studied many of his operas.

Photo. by Curtis Moffat.] [*To face p.* 96.

spare a pair of boots. . . . !" No, really—"Dearest Clemmy, tell Winston that he must pave the way for A. P., whom I have loved for four years. . . ."

Later.

"By some oversight," this letter isn't posted yet, so I add that Mme. Arkel said I sang the first act of *Bohème* "*divinamente*," and called all the relations and pupils in to hear me. I wish she'd been like that when you were here. To-morrow I am going to Ricordi. He wrote me a most nice letter—but so did I to him. I said: "I expect you may not remember me; I am very, very tall."

The Clapham Common murder is too good.

I went again to the *Rosenkavalier*. It was much more wonderful seen the second time, and I cried all through the last act—tears which Von H—— had not met with before, so he loaded me with red roses next day.

To A. P., *22nd March.*

Darling,—I can't make out if I told you about *Fanciulla del West.* I went to Ricordi, who is not thrilled, but said "much better, a real soprano," and so on. He then played *Fanciulla del West* for an hour on the piano, and said that I was to study it in English before he left for abroad; but as he leaves in two weeks from now, there isn't much time. It's worse to study than Debussy, and higher than Strauss.

"You be-et your bot-tom dol-lar he'd pu-ut me up to a thi-ing or two, Mr Joh-nson"—all this slogged away on high A's and C's.

Ricordi said: "What a pity you are a *débutante* in singing! I could have sent you to Canada or South America for a seven months' tour." This doesn't sound much catch to me, but it may to you. I know you like me safe out of the country!

Later.

Oh dearest, this letter will never be written. I am so busy for Ricordi and Mme. Arkel, pretending to her that I am working hard at *Bohème*. I am to try and learn it by Friday!

I had a letter from Patrick to-day, who thought that I had kept from him that you were here. He knew it well, poor lad! Also a sweet letter from Hosges, in the wilds of Germany, teaching English. I saw Bori to-day to talk to, when I was lunching with Edmund Burke at the big fashionable pension where all the artists go. She is so lovely off the stage, a real beauty, with slanting-up eyes like Sybil Sassoon.

CLAPHAM COMMON MURDER.[1]

The "Clapham Common" murderer was tried before Mr Justice Darling in March 1911. It caused a

[1] There are three murders in this short section of my life, and they must have made a great impression upon me; that is why I think it

tremendous amount of interest, because it seemed like a vendetta. A petition for the reprieve of the sentence on Morrison was sent to the King. Mr Winston Churchill, then Home Secretary, decided to exercise the power of mercy, and the death sentence was commuted to one of penal servitude for life.

To quote Mr Fletcher Moulton :—

"Whatever his character may have been in civil life, Morrison proved himself a violent and intractable prisoner. The first part of his sentence showed many records of punishment for violence, but after he was removed to Parkhurst he gave way to despair, and sought his release by death. Self-starvation was the only available means, and this he took, not at once by a single long abstinence, but by a series of fasts which wore down even his magnificent physique, till finally, on 24th January 1921, he passed away in Parkhurst Prison Infirmary."

To A. P., *27th March.*

Darling,—It's a pity that you haven't sent the book, as I've been sadly reading *Nicholas Nickleby* while in

worth while to remind readers of their circumstances. They happened to be particularly famous crimes and worth recording as great topics of the day. I do not think I was particularly bloodthirsty in the things I liked to read, but the state of mind and the character of the murderers interested me then as they do now.

bed. To-day I shall begin *Fanciulla del West.* I can't think whether I should sing it "thuyty dollars woyth of education"; there's very little recitative, and it's all written in strange Indian chants, which Christopher Columbus may or may not have heard on touching Indian soil. Hundreds of good young men come and play me *Rosenkavalier*, which, turning it over in my mind, is quite the most blatantly, alphabetically, sensual music there is. I have the score, bought second-hand at a slight profit to me.

Later.

I am still in bed, with nothing to read but Eno's pamphlet on Eno. I find it very good. One sentence began "Life is a battle," which I read as "Life is a bottle," which would have been much more appropriate. I confess you are a bad walker and runner, but a very graceful climber and sprinter. I wish that I had brought those thick, green, yellow snowdrops away with me that we saw together. Tell me, as you know my weakness, exactly all your measure of work, praise, successes with Jeanne, and what hopes she has for you.

To-day is the same as Thursday, and yesterday is the same as to-morrow, as far as I know, and no nearer Ricordi. I am so terrified of defying doctors, for fear it should mean another week's illness afterwards. In

England it would mean influenza, but here they have ideas about fever for its own sake, and feed one on rice.

From Paolo Tosti to V. T., *29th March.*

Je suis bien desolé de vous savoir malade! Cosa avete fatto? Chi vi ha avvellenata? Spero che a quest'ora siete completamente rimessa; ma sopra tutto non siate triste perche "la vita," pure a la vostra età e troppa corta! Mi faccio una grande festa di riveder voi e la vostra adorabile amica. Saro a Milano forse Venerdi sera alle 9.45 (credo). Lasciatemi una parola all' Hotel de la Ville. Vorrei vedervi immediatiamente, e se non e troppo tardi ditemi dove posso incontrarvi alle 11 o le 11.30 l'istessa sera. Se non potessi partire venerdi vi telegrafero.

Vi bacio le due mani, vostro devoto Tosti.

To A. P., *3rd April.*

Tosti is here, dearest, loving me, but hating my singing, and saying that my pronunciation and look when singing, and timbre, are all wrong. His conversation, as you know, is of the oddest. He told me much of D'Annunzio, who is now in Paris. He is only forty-seven, just fancy! Tosti must be eighty in the shade, but not unattractive. He asked me a lot about you.

To-day Tosti came to lunch with us. He seemed very pleased. He gave Maria *un buon baccio*—very much against her will—also a lovely old ring. He gave me a Cartier diamond stud. He is the most wonderful friend. He did "Vissi d'Arte" for about an hour and a half; then Cesare Ludovici came in, and I sang "L'Ultima Cazione." He said to Cesare, "*Ma come potrebbe cantare questa donna? Potrebbe essere nel Paradiso; ha una voce di tal potenza, e poi é tanto intelligente.*" But then down came an avalanche of dislike for what I do, and that I ought to have pins stuck into me all the time that I am singing.

To A. P., *5th April.*

Tosti gave me a lesson yesterday on *Norma*. He is thrilled with my voice, and says if I will come to London he will give me two lessons a day. Perhaps I shall.

It is not in the least spring here yet—awful weather, in fact—and Tosti says it was so lovely at Rome. Ludovici turns out to be a man of property, with marble mines at Carrara; but here he is a penniless advocate.

Oh, I have a plan. Your twenty francs you sent me I send you to buy a blouse for me—white linen or thin batiste. It must have lace on it—appliqué, but not made of lace. It must have a low neck, and outline very well the hills and dales of my figure. It may cost

the whole of twenty francs. The best place when I was young was the Galérie Lafayette. One can't get those shirts anywhere but in Paris or New York. Tell Jeanne it is for your sister, of the largest size. Perhaps you have no time for such things, in which case it does not matter.

I went to the English Church this morning, which was too awful—nothing but English tourists; and as they couldn't make the service long enough, they jogged about the Prayer-Book with all sorts of collects.

Later I went to the Duomo, being Palm Sunday, a nice place. But the priests were odd, and the Pope, or the next thing to him, went to sleep. They did a good deal of standing on the altar, and then some boys, like English village boys, sang Bach unaccompanied.

I am doing *Adrienne Lecouvreur* with Arkel, and racing to finish *Fanciulla* for Ricordi by Friday.

To A. P., *Easter Sunday*.

Como.

We are at Brunate, above Como, instead of Varese, as I didn't quite know if I could bear it without you. We look on to that brown hill, "far away, without a city wall," that we know so well. This is rather a

horrid place, and a horrid *albergo*, but as usual wonderful food, telephone, and an excellent Bechstein. Of course, none of the charm of our mountain top. I really think there is no place as good as our Hotel Colonne at Sacro Monte, though I know you have a weakness for islands and tropical plants, also for gables and gargoyles, and panels; but give me the straight yellow house, with straight white rooms and green shutters. Darling, how happy we were!

I will tell you about Ricordi. I don't know what I feel. Either that I must make superhuman efforts to be better, or give it up altogether. I have been doing *The Girl of the Golden West* for ages, as you know. I believed I knew it, but he pulled me up at every bar to-day, and said, "*Dove la voce? Ma, cara mia, tutta la voce. Perche avete paura?*" "That's not the way to sing," etc. And he never once said "That's good," or "fine," or "brava"—merely stopping and stopping, and making me do the C's and B's about eight times over to get them long enough. I suppose that he is the most wonderful coach in the world, but—heavens, how cruel! At the end he said, "Perhaps it is too heavy for you as yet. But go on, and come on Wednesday." It appears he only wants me for a baddish tour in England, as he thinks no one without a great reputation first ought to go to America. Anyhow, he thinks me a rotter—and I was singing my best. Don't think it's a blow to me, because I know

quite well that, compared to all foreign singers, I am bad. I think you know my faults—that's the worst of it, I feel you do—bless you!

I feel slightly down, and that the next run of *Blue Bird* will see me yet. I go to Ricordi Wednesday at four; I wish I could fascinate him with witchcraft, damn him! Maria says that you are "*un tresor.*"

To A. P., 9*th April.*

MILAN.

I am perhaps going to Berlin for a week on Saturday, with Daddy, on sort of business. But no good, I'll be bound. I am so frightened about Ricordi to-morrow, because I have done no work, and I have a cold. My dear! It was a "floater" and Ludovici waited at Sacro Monte for two days, thinking I was going back.

You don't tell me your plans. Good-bye, dear, dear one. "Remember not my sins." Maria tells me that she told you to be severe with me. O Lord! when other people interfere with one's real life, how rotten it is!

To A. P., 10*th April.*

I have seen a lot since I saw you—*Arianne et Barbe Bleue*. Don't miss it if it's in Paris—wonderful and dark, and dull. The first scene is splendid. Then

Ricordi, who is much kinder, but only because I had on my new dress. He loves some things I do, but he's worried about some of my high notes—B and C only —so am I. A young German student is coming to-morrow; he thinks that he can help me with these notes. Then, on the advice of Ricordi, I went to Jack Johnson and Jeffreys' boxing on the gramophone —I mean the cinema. Of course you can guess what I felt about Jack Johnson—my goodness! Simply Julian dropped into an ink-bottle, like the great Agrippa in Strufelepeter.

Von H—— cries all day, and Daddy probably comes from Paris on Monday, where he now is, and where you are. No one knows if he will want to go and visit little boys at their lessons, but you will meet at some low haunt.

I haven't the money of an owl, and they want to sell Japanese loan bonds of mine, which is more than I can bear, as they are such good shares.

You've no idea about the heat here—divine.

Last night was the Bach *St Matthew Passion* music. I feel we shall not hear it so beautifully given again. Trieste choir, and Scala orchestra. What spoilt it were harsh little Italian boys' voices from the Duomo.

I didn't say enough about your letter. It's curious the impression I give of not loving you; it's simply that I cannot endure to speak about it, not even to dear little

Maria, whom I love. I feel in a way that's why Peter denied Christ. When people say, " Are you very much in love with him ? " I feel inclined to say " No."

But I don't feel inclined ever to spend another spring in England. You never saw such a spring as there is here.

LE DAIMIO

Sous le noir fouet de guerre et quadrouple pompon,
L'étalon belliqueux, en hennissant, se cabre,
Et fait bruire, avec des cliquetis de sabre,
La cuirasse de bronze aux lames du jupon.

Le chef, vetu d'airain, de laque et de crepon,
Otant le masque a poil de son visage glabre,
Regarde le volcan sur un ciel de cinabre,
Dresser la neige ou rit l'aurore du Nippon.

Mais il a vu, en l'est eclabousse d'or, l'astre
Glorieux d'éclairer le matin de désastre,
Poindre, orbe éblouissant, au dessus de la mer ;

Et pour couvrir ses yeux dont pas un cil bouge,
Il ouvre d'un seul coup son eventail de fer
Ou dans le satin blême se leve un soleil rouge.

José Maria de Heredia.

What did you think this was about ? A French actor ?—and that " Nippon " was the French for Liver-

pool? Quite likely. I think that it is one of the best things in life. But then Japanese aren't such gods to you as to me. How lovely to have a word called *glabre!* You have *a visage glabre*, but not now, because it has a heavy beard like Crippen.

I go to Ricordi again to-day. I am frightened to death. The weather is such as you never find in Mexico; all trees have "exploded together," as George Wyndham said of the daffodils in Ireland.

From Memory.

I remember going to meet my father with Maria at Turin. He thought that the great Turin Exhibition was open, but it turned out to be two weeks too early. There was nothing to do but stay the night in this very dull place at a big hotel. I was slightly irritated by the presence of Maria, wanting my father to myself. But he had the most conventional ideas about my being chaperoned, even when he was there himself. Also he liked Maria, and in his tremendous kindness of heart wanted her to have the luxury of big hotels and motor drives. By what I thought a miracle of luck, Ricordi was staying in the hotel, and enticed my father to a dress rehearsal of Verdi's *Falstaff*, a heavenly opera. My father, I think, was bored, but he played up valiantly for me. The next day we three went back to Milan, because I wanted my father to hear me

sing. Also I had an introduction to Ludikar, singing the great bass rôle in *Rosenkavalier*. My father was very anxious that I should get my wish, and sing the rôle of Octavian when it came to London. I think Beecham had by then arranged with my father to take His Majesty's for an opera season, so he was in a strong position with both Beecham and Strauss. It is amazing to me to think how selfish and egotistical I must have been to drag my father about in one-horse flies through the streets of Milan, while I laid my little schemes, and sang my little songs. I remember singing to him, in my little paved sitting-room at Castel Morone, the card scene out of the *Fanciulla del West*, throwing out my chest and screaming like a doped thrush. We had one or two days on the Lake of Como after this, but I think he was disappointed that I did not leave my notes and follow him.

Postcard to A. P., 18*th April*.

Daddy is here, at last thrilled by my singing. It is so odd. Oh, the revenge on those who disbelieved in me will be good some day! He immediately began making plans for me. I wrote you a good letter last night.

To A. P., 19*th April*.

I am in rather a strange place, at the top of a house in Como, waiting to have my hair done by a peasant,

who does not arrive. It is divine weather, hot, with occasional rain.

I loved you so last night. Daddy's magnetic presence and the silence of the lake make me think of you. Daddy has come round about my singing—did I tell you ?—and he raved more than not about the ease with which I sang, which was fun. Now he says every quarter of an hour, " Awfully good about your voice, dear," instead of " Are you sure you're wise, dear ? "

Herr Von H—— is very much in love with me, and if I don't marry you I think I shall marry him. He is so big and bearish, yet so early-Victorian, and, as you say, such a gentleman. He understands me so well, and says, " *du Fruhling, du Fruhling* " twice over.

I have sold a hundred of railway shares, so that I needn't pinch here. I shall be really rich, and, if you like, I will buy you a ticket to come here. Darling, the " Ingres " Exhibition is this week. " La Source " was his lover, wasn't she ? Find out. I've got a lovely little photograph of it in one of my Byron books in London.

Von H—— and Hans came yesterday—Hans with a sweet round face—and did exercises on my voice, and helped me a lot ; and then he puts his arms round me, and all the rest were there. Poor Von H—— cried in the corner. Daddy is thrilled with my voice, and said, " I see now that singing is more of a science."

To A. P., *22nd April.*

Daddy rather wanted you to adapt a play for him, but then said it wanted a subtle person, and that he might get Granville Barker. Would you be able to, after your exam., perhaps? If you don't pass the thing, I certainly can't marry you, you must see that. If you were going to be Daddy's secretary, you had better have been it four years ago. How can I explain to Daddy why we don't marry? He can't understand our bearing to be apart. I wish you could explain, as man to man. Good-bye, dear creature; I don't know what I want. Natalie Benckendorf's [1] wedding made me terribly envious. I don't think I do very well without you.

To A. P., *24th April.*

The latest bulletin is a telegram from my father: "Important you go Berlin to sing to Saltar; Strauss is willing you sing the page, or Mareschalin. I might come Saturday." Well, you see how it stands. The opera is for Drury Lane in October next. I can be

[1] The daughter of the then Russian Ambassador, married to Lord Ridley's son Jasper, great friend of the Oxford group and Raymond Asquith.

ready for Mareschalin ; it is the only part, I feel. What do you ? [1]

To A. P., *29th April.*

I am waiting for orders to go to Berlin at any moment. Till then I must be rather on tip-toe. Also my score of the Strauss opera was lost at Turin, and I am fussing dreadfully to get another. Stay another week for me, I will try and get to you somehow.

A thought that clouds my whole life is that I have to go home in June, because Mother is becoming so restless about me, and the Coronation, and things. It seems hopeless and idiotic, my dear, when the streets here are filled with rose-sellers and cherry-sellers, and pomegranate branches. Patrick says that the industry of your life is something awful.

Telegram to A. P., *4th May.*

Could arrive Strasburg 10.55 Monday morning. Only eight hours from Paris, Cour Firstenstrasse 111.

[1] I evidently went off in a great hurry with Maria to Berlin. This was really the first step in the wrong direction, as I was not ready, so it discouraged me ; and I left Ricordi just at the moment when he was getting interested in me for the *Fanciulla*, and disappointed Arkel, who thought the music in any case too difficult, and wished me to study the conventional repertoire.

Photo by Alfred Ellis.] [*To face p.* 112.

EXTRACTS FROM DIARY, *1st May.*

Went to Berlin, a town I can't help liking, so full of work and beer, so gay. Wasted time with Saltar's family—hours of politeness. He says must have German *Kapelmeister* to get me into German style.

6th May.

Discouraged. Sent Maria to her family, and wandered off into the blue to meet A. P. at Strasburg. Lovely time. Wild lilies of the valley everywhere, wild strawberries in the woods. Plans badly, hurriedly laid. Waste of time, waste of money, except the beauty of the country, and seeing A. P. in it. We walked from Strasburg and then took a little local train through the Black Forest. The beauty of the woods was like a drug. All the Heines and Goethes came over one in a wave, and Alan, not knowing the language, felt it too. Schumann and Schubert it meant to him.

10th May.

Hurried back to Milan.

12th May.

Von H—— has crammed the room with flowers—peonies and irises.

To A. P., *17th May.*

No one knows when or where this will reach you. I had a divine letter from Patrick, a very affectionate and sweet, saying that you knew nothing of the seamy side of Paris, but chiefly lived in the Tube. I don't know if I told you that my own dear Ricordi has sent me to another man for high notes, called G——o, still keeping to Arkel. You remember my high C is still squeaky, instead of being like an E. Yes, it's a fair secret about my singing *Rosenkavalier.* Everyone except Mme. A. says four times a week is too much to sing; no one knows. I can't tell you how glad I am that I am seeing about my high notes. They really were a stumbling-block.

Give my best love to your mother. My idea is to winter in Italy; what is yours? It must be strange to be you, with no irons in the fire. You never have to think "Given this, I shall do that."

I had my first new lesson to-day, with G——o, and learnt a good deal, though my voice is quite gone since before Berlin.[1] I am afraid there are some things I

[1] I was evidently too hurried by my decision to go to Richard Strauss for an audition to write. So when I left Castel Morone, it was for the last time, as I had come to the end of my lease. The idea was to go only for twenty-four hours, and I think disappointment killed my powers of concentration, and I felt ashamed to return to the people with whom I had worked and to whom I had boasted. I went straight to Munich, to a little hotel recommended by Von H——,

regret, such as not having gone to Kaisersberg in the first instance. I love you, though, enough.

A Visit to Strauss, 1910.[1]

(Written on my return to London.)

I received a telegram from London from several would-be wise men to say I had better get into touch with Richard Strauss, and then go and sing to him, thus forestalling other bidders for the boy's part in *Rosenkavalier*, also establishing an *entente* with that great composer.

I telegraphed to my agent in London, to enquire his address. I did not like spending money on telegrams, though the money lavished on me for telegrams from London must have been something appalling in the two years I was there. The porter and even the telegraph boy would remark "*Quanti telegrammi!*" Fancy an English peasant doing that!

Well, I sent to Strauss, with the help of Maria, my little German-Swiss companion, and my Austrian officer friend Von H——, a perfect telegram in German to say: "When shall I come? and shall I bring accom-

and wrote a postcard to A. P. (St Sebastian by Vandyck was the subject of the picture). So it begins "Glorious man this." D'Annunzio has made it into a play. Strauss shows no sign of life. I shall just stay till he does. Thank you for your great sympathy and real help. Poor Strauss! I wonder how he will make the best of a bad job.

[1] I wrote this a year after my visit, so that I might not forget a wonderful experience. So it contains one or two repetitions.

panist ? " He telegraphed back (to my surprise, for I thought geniuses never answered) : " Come Sunday. Accompanist unnecessary." This meant going without Maria to save expense, but what a fool I was not to take her ! In the hours of doubt, and before deciding to telegraph, we discussed the desirability of going. I expect I had " got it into my little head " to go, but still was not liking to leave behind the chance of seeing Ricordi's English impresario about *The Girl of the Golden West*, and leaving my voice just as it was really turning the corner between amateur and professional (such a big corner did people but know it).

Von H—— thought it wrong to go to be heard by such a connoisseur of voices as he knew Strauss to be. However, I sang a bit of *Rosenkavalier* that evening, and he, sitting behind me on the little sofa, was struck all of a heap, and really thought it good. He said : " *Sie schlagt aus mit die Stimme.*" [1] I felt this to be good praise and quite true. I had a wonderful new sensation of jumping down on to my lungs as though they were a spring bed.

Mme. Arkel, my singing teacher, was not for my going unless I sang things I knew perfectly. She wanted me to sing *Otello* and *Tosca*. Ricordi said also that I didn't know the part, that the light soprano was the part for me—the *ingénue* that Claire Dux sang so marvellously in London ; but I think he was

[1] Hits out with his voice.

wrong, as that part would not have shown off my acting.

The day of my departure arrived. I had lots of luggage, of course, and only just time to pack it for next day, and get my money from the bank; for it was settled that I might go on to London if I failed to satisfy Strauss. Why this, I don't know; it should obviously have been the reverse, that if I failed I should return quietly to study; but there was no shadow of failure in my mind at that time, although I took the luggage to be on the safe side.

H—— took me out the night before the day of decision to dinner, the first time he had taken me out alone. He called for me, and gave me as a present three beautiful pairs of silk stockings—stockings were my weakness, and always will be. They were marvellous colours, *Knall grun* and *Fux roth*, and all the jolly catch-words and nicknames foreigners have for colours and textures. It is only lately that we have competed with "ashes of roses," and "elephant's breath." I have never heard anything in England except saxe blue, which is German at that.

We went to a restaurant—just a little open-air one—near the Brera, having walked straight up the canal path into the sunset; and there were *écrevisses* to eat, which I thought poison; but argued that I was on the brink of a great adventure, and if I were partially poisoned it would be Fate barring my path.

I got up very early, amidst all the hateful *débris* which seems necessary for a journey—shoes and papers all over the room, and breakfast on a chair, the table being taken up with linen, etc. I wore my folding pocket hat, chosen by H—— (wrongly), and taking with me my very faded but still lovely bridesmaid's hat,[1] blouses, and night things in the hat-box. I had on a horrid little blue serge coat and skirt, so as to have only this for all weathers, while the rest of the luggage would be in the trunk and unget-at-able, in case I went to London.

H—— told me of a small and quiet hotel in Munich, "Bellevue." It was to be practically my first journey alone, and certainly my first hotel alone, and I felt so proud of it. But it proved disastrous, and from that moment I knew why all great artists are surrounded by a crowd of rather dull, drab, practical people as satellites—not, let me tell you, to lay flowers at their feet, but rather to take their railway tickets, teach them their parts, hold their purse-strings, and see that their backs are not covered with chalk or rust on entering a house. Not that I was a great artist, or within leagues of it, but I possessed the faults of one—inability to decide for or take care of myself.

Von H—— had decided to come with me as far as the frontier. Milan to Munich is a nice, easy, direct

[1] Sir Charles Gill, K.C.'s daughter Elsie. He was one of my father's greatest friends. The hat is seen on the frontispiece.

journey, and not far—about as far as Yorkshire to London, it seemed.

All my friends came to the station, and I waved to my house as I passed it as we went through the suburb. After that I never took my eyes off my music-case on the rack. I had lost some valuable music before, and was wary. Von H—— gave me the most lovely present, a fine sort of pinchbeck chain (obviously not costing much, but all he had), with at intervals a beautiful lapis-lazuli stone, very blue and glorious. I wore it for the rest of the journey, and thought what he thought—that there was a faint chance of my marrying him—but perhaps he did not think it ; anyhow, he was ready to take his chance and generously fond of me, and I was sad to part from him when the train stopped at the frontier, and sombreros became Homburgs, and slightly Kaiserish-looking sportsmen began to show themselves on the platforms.

I considered that I had plenty of money ; my father had sent me plenty for the expedition, so I was not worried for that.

At Munich I took a fly and drove to the hotel ; the town seemed like the White City, only better. All the windows were full of the beautiful schemes of colours familiar to us now. In every shop window, and new to me, were lemon colour and flame, and purple, and putty colour.

The hotel was in a piazza quite unpretentious and

nice, and clean as clean; and I made friends with the porter, who mistrusted me, but I trusted him. I decided to get a *Kapelmeister* to coach me in the part, so went to the music shop (Augener, I think) and bought a score of *Rosenkavalier*, an immense thing, and costing the eyes of the head. I paid for that and enquired for the accompanist; they gave me the address of several. I telegraphed the first, received a favourable answer, and went in search of a hat shop—luckily not closed on Saturday in Germany. Found wonderful shops, but was mug enough not to afford the good shops, but to go into a common little shop and buy a shape and some artificial, satin, sylvan-looking flowers. I then went to the hotel in a tram with this large paper bag and opera score.

By then it was nearly dinner-time. I had given myself the twenty-four hours to rest my voice, as I found it upset after travelling. Went down and ate half a chicken and delicious salad. To bed early with some rather common French book.

Next morning I sent a reply-paid telegram to Strauss, to ask what time I should come. I thought Strauss lived at sort of Richmond, but not at all; he lived at much more sort of Lyndhurst, quite a long journey. My accompanist meanwhile had come—a terrified little musical German, with too much technique and too many spectacles to make a good accompanist. He seemed amazed and alarmed about my going to the

Herr Doctor Strauss, and when we attacked the first two pages of Octavian's part seemed in difficulties—which was hard on me. How well I can see him and me in that room pegging away! The saloon had a wild, mustard-oil, crimson beauty of its own, and the little, fair, pink *Kapelmeister* thumped away for dear life at the same old bit, each time a little better. After paying him his enormous fee, I returned to sit on my small bed and make my hat, and choose my blouse out of three crumpled ones, to go for my Strauss expedition. I chose the one with a high neck and sort of jabot and frill, which was everyone's idea of smartness then, in order to appear as much like the eighteenth-century Rosenkavalier as possible. The hat looked like a bad governess's hat, I thought, as I sat and twined its wreath, sitting there kicking my heels against the counterpane. My nerves gradually got the better of me, and I decided to start before lunch—a train getting there about two, my appointment being four, as I could not stand the waiting. The porter whom I thought my friend looked out the train, and I got off in an *Einspanner* so as not to tire myself. I was very careful because of my voice. The journey took longer than I thought, but was through the most wonderful country—I believe the Oberammergau Line—and was also more expensive (18 marks return, I think) than I had calculated, leaving me with only about seven marks for my day. My first thought was food. I chose, at the

first inn I came to, eggs *au plat* (good for the voice) and beer to take away the nervousness, a heavy mug as long as my forearm. During this I took the opportunity of ordering a fly to drive to Strauss's house, having my heavy score to carry (of which we are destined to hear more). They cheated me, of course, in this as in everything, for the drive was only a few minutes from the inn, and the fly-man took four marks, and directed me with a wave of his whip to a house, which one could see through the convent-like iron gate. Much too early I was, so dismissed the fly, and walked a little way to a stream which I had noticed a few hundred yards back, carrying my score, which I longed to throw over the gate, like Becky Sharp, to await my arrival. The beer and the score sat rather heavily on me, and I longed to sleep. The river was most lovely and lush, recalling all the best Schumanns and Schuberts —"The Miller's Daughter," "The Trout," and "I heard a brooklet."

It was a perfect and boiling day, and when the time came to go back I regretted having walked so far, as it made me a little hotter and dustier than I need have been as I walked up the path. A beautiful attempt at an English garden, rather hanging down in terraces from the attempt at Lutyen's house, with a big loggia "commanding," as the agents say, a "spacious" view of the mountains, which were low and distant, and therefore marvellous.

I hoped sincerely that Strauss would not be on the loggia watching me dragging my score. But no! An attempt at an English parlourmaid ushered me through a beautiful hall, rather purple and black, past a sort of alcove where I imagine Strauss's son was reading with his tutor—a beautiful, rather delicate boy like a Giotto, about eleven years old—into the music-room. Strauss was not there, and I had time to look. There were lovely things in it, but my eyes immediately glued themselves to the piano as though it had been a guillotine. It looked innocent enough, and was placed with its keys right out towards the light in the bay window. On it were loose manuscripts, and the pen-and-ink full score of *Feuersnot*. Finally my eyes wandered from this to the walls—Beardsley drawings or better, and Capo di Monte china, cretonnes, and cushions, and the suppressed luxury of an English country house.

I was by then terrified, but not any more from the point of view of his being one of the greatest men of the world, but more from the point of view of seeing a dentist or a palmist for the first time.

He came in and shook hands, and asked me whether I would *abnehmen* (take off). I said I would " take off " my hat ; he then asked me if I spoke German. I said I did, but all power of speech disappeared in that tongue from that moment. He told me that he had heard from the agent Saltar what I wanted, and that

it might be managed; but that I should have to study the part with a German coach. I thrust the *Nozze di Figaro* under his nose—the aria in the last act, a lovely thing I knew well; but unluckily I had learnt the German words in the train, thinking I could master them quickly. He began to play, perfectly, of course, and I started the recitative in a very nice voice, I thought, but the words went. He said very kindly: "Sing in Italian. Never mind." This I did. He made no comment, except to say it was *sympathique*. I knew the word "*sympathique*" too well; it has haunted me "a faint damn" ever since I started singing. My heart sank.

I got out of my bag *La Tosca*, the big aria, and said: "Perhaps this is the kind of music you can't suffer?"

He said: "It is, but I can bear it for once."

I got on well with that, and told myself, so as not to deceive myself by hopes, that I had sung it as well as I ever did. However, he seemed anxious, and said: "I will call my wife; she has a much better ear than I have."

He went to the door, opened it, and just inside, like something in a wardrobe, stood Mme. Strauss, as though the opening of the door had allowed free expansion. She was dressed in perfect white, attempt at English tennis dress; only, wonder of all wonders, a bunch of keys slung at her waist. One has heard so much about German housewives and their keys, but

never thought to see them in the flesh, or rather *on* the flesh, as I did. She had beautiful blonde hair, and was good-looking and kind, speaking very encouragingly in French; but she turned at once to him and said:

"*Sie hat eben ein tremolo; man weiss nicht ob sie ein B fis oder dur singt*" ("One doesn't know whether she sings B flat or B natural").

I explained: "Oh, but it's the journey, madame. Travelling makes my voice unsteady."

He said: "I'm afraid the voice is too tender, or it would not be upset by the journey."

They put their heads together, and asked me to sing something more. I sang "*Traum durch die Dämmerung*" of his own, and then volunteered to bring out my score of *Rosenkavalier*. They thought it a great feat to have carried it all that way. I sang the first two pages of Octavian very well, standing at the other end of the room, so that he could hear me from a distance. She again said I had a tremolo, and that I should have to learn from the beginning with a German, and emitted herself a few strident but well-trained tones. I, having gone to Italy on purpose to acquire that loose vibratory sound, felt the ridiculousness of acquiescing, or of maintaining that I could make the sort of sound she did when I was in England, as a sort of protective colouring, because there everybody did it. This, indeed, always has been my best thing—that I can adapt my voice to different ideas and different

rôles just as an actor adapts his make-up ; but it probably was the ruin of it. Never mind. I could not say that to them.

He said: "You sing like a good actress—not like a singer. Now, Fraulein von der Osten, she has the voice I want: I wrote the part for her. I want for London a voice that is ready, not a growing, uncertain voice like yours."

I longed for Maria to explain me and edit me. As it was, I could only murmur apologies and walk towards tea. On the way Mme. Strauss pounced on my hat, and asked me where I got it.

"Never here in Munich?"

I said: "Yes, but I trimmed it myself."

She turned to Strauss and said: "True, Richard! Only an Englishwoman could find such a pretty thing here."

I thought the hat awful, and was ashamed of the tissue paper instead of lining.

Tea was nice, the best German *confisserie*. I sat on the balustrade and had great efforts in keeping tears out of my eyes and out of my tea-cup, which I held up as a guard. Mme. Strauss was so sweet, and kept saying it was such a pity I couldn't sing the part, as I looked so like a boy with my "*Stumpfnäschen*" (little blunt nose). They were both very sorry for me, and he talked of his music half apologetically and detachedly. He said:

"You know my music isn't easy; it's complicated, and the Italians can't bother to listen to it. They aren't painstaking enough. You are a young singer and should not attempt most of my things. I do not spare voices."

He seemed very happy, gentle, and well-cared-for, and had the most unconceited manner I ever knew. How unlike Wagner, I thought, who wore a laurel wreath as one might wear a skull-cap. I think she saw that I wanted to go, and asked about my train. I pretended vagueness, and said it was at five something; but it really wasn't till nearly seven. How lucky that shyness gives one another sort of self-control on these occasions! How easily I might have troubled and wounded my good-hearted hostess and highly-strung host with an outburst of silly tears. I kept these for my walk back past the little river to the village. The score was far heavier now. Like a wooden leg, as opposed to a real one, it became useless. I looked at my change, which was roaming about in my glove, found two marks fifty, and thought I would spend some on hiring urchins to show me where the wild lilies of the valley grew. This was typical of me. Having decided that nothing mattered for the moment, that by that blow I was sort of born again. Having brought nothing into the world, I was taking nothing away, as it were, I therefore could look about me, as indeed new-born creatures do, with the two crafty

Junkers, who were as nasty as Strauss was nice. I made a bee-line for the mountains. I found marvellous flora and fauna, waxen wicked orchids, overpowering dwarf cyclamen, and little thick white flowers whose names I didn't know, and "lords and ladies" which were so fine of their kind that had there been anyone to listen I should have made a weak joke about their being dukes and duchesses; wild strawberries, of course, and finally, just at the edge of the forest that ruffled round the mountain, were the lilies of the valley. We picked a lot of these. The boys lagged and spat and made fun of me as we walked back, and refused to carry my score, so I took that and gave them the flowers to carry, which made them dusty and spoilt.

Passing through the village on my way to the station, what did I do but buy a bit of peasant cotton, still under the influence of the numb Russian mood of only taking in the little things of life. I then found and confessed to the boys that I had only fifty centimes left to divide between them. They were infuriated, and took the money and ran. I was therefore left with a mile to walk, my score, the flowers, and the parcel. It was a relief to be parted from the boys, but the road was hot and dusty, and I reached the station dead, my return ticket melting in my glove. Of the evening I remember nothing.

V. T. to A. P., *8th June* 1911.

Hotel Bellevue, Munchen.

Darling,—I don't know what to say to you, because I think you know so well, and will be so cross.

Write to me. No, don't; I shall see you soon, but don't come often.

Strauss was divine, gentle, and perfect—manners rather like yours, also like my Uncle Julius, who died. Divine accompanying, divine sympathy, but thinking that the middles notes were not big enough for the part. Thinking me gloriously musical, and tasteful, and beautiful—only the old voice again, husky and wobbly in the middle. My new teacher was getting that right. If only I had gone to him before. Arkel has only done the high notes, which you know are beautiful now. I am quite tired and very hungry, so I expect I shall sleep well.

I wonder if I am a lyric soprano after all—who knows ?

Of course, we none of us thought I was ready, did we ? And *Rosenkavalier* was only a sort of dash into the blue. Maria and Von H—— were furious at the idea, so I shall go back and study in Milan later. But if you don't pass the Civil Service exam. I shall give it up. So you will say, " There is another bogey ! " It's not a bogey, but all things working together for good.

I feel very tired, naturally, and discouraged.

Much love. Don't talk of it or tell a soul. Simply say that Whitney behaved badly and that Saltar backed out.[1]

Monday Night, 8th June.

HOTEL BELLEVUE, MUNCHEN.

Your lovely, thankful letter has come at the moment when I need it most, and yet when perhaps I am able to feel it least. The blow has fallen, and I want you to use your head hard for me, if you can spare a day or two days to go up to London and see to it for me. I think you are the only person with a rigid head, who can grasp all facts at once.

Saltar writes quite slowly and neatly from Berlin that Whitney thinks me too tall! but all the same will allow me to sing the second week of the production once or perhaps twice. This is so degrading and idiotic. He says that my father has telegraphed his consent, but I think not, or else he must have been misled. You see its cause and effect.

Whitney (the impresario who has taken Covent Garden for *Rosenkavalier*), when asked about three months ago if I could sing, said, "It depends on Strauss." Strauss, when asked one month ago, said, "It depends on Saltar; I accept his judgment."

[1] This was rather a boastful letter, to keep up A.'s courage.

I forthwith sang to Saltar and was accepted as the creator of the part. Only, as it might be too tiring, not to sing every day of the week, he said, "As you will be a great asset and addition to the cast, I am sure they will accept the terms. Don't go to any other agent, because I can get you the best terms. Leave all to me." That is so hard, to think I might have been singing to Whitney or anyone all this time.

The question is now for you to ask through Walter and Schmid if the other person, or persons, are already engaged for Mareschalle and Cavalier. If so, it is not worth fighting. I simply renounce any further association with it. If, however, they are still looking for artists, it would be worth while for me to sing to Whitney in London, as I come anyhow in ten days or so. Find this out. I don't mind not singing, because, of course, it's a bit early; but I do mind just being put on for one night as an understudy. That would be quite impossible for Daddy's position and mine. The object of singing is to be a new thing, a vogue, a star, and to go off to America as it—not to shove on without a salary—good God! To sing quietly here in some small place, and then to get on gradually, that's the thing. I think the other would be ruin, as it is a fearfully hard part, and would want all rehearsals. It makes me very heavy and sad, as I hoped this would be the beginning of our good fortune. Now I feel as though the whole thing had crumbled again.

Next Morning, 9th June.

Darling,—It is morning, and I have had the most hellish night. But now I see that it is all right and I am ready to chuck it, because my dear Ricordi will arrange my career wisely and better for me, and I can leave that. Only I mean to get Daddy to repudiate all they say.

Dear one, what does it matter now so long as I am to be great ? Lord ! You must pass your exam.

God ! To think of the stupid little love-affairs I have had with von H. and Ludovici when I ought to have been fighting for life. Dear creature, see Mother, and talk to her long and loud about me. Tell her it is useless for me to go to Berlin. Saltar says he might be induced possibly to introduce me to Whitney, if by any chance Whitney was there, but that it was unlikely ; but it would not do any good, and I am not going through the humiliation of travelling through Europe on a forlorn hope. Let things be. It is our first proof that agents are traitors. Ricordi was right.

10th June.

MUNICH.

Dearest,—I know now what you would feel if you lost me, under rather disgraceful circumstances. Just a numb pain all the time, and eating as usual, and taking an interest in beer as usual, suicide looming, but very,

very far and hardly intelligibly. Time and tides and future not mattering at all. And every time one wakes, waking happy, but anxious as to whether it was a dream or not.

I have bought you something which you are to say quite honestly whether it is good or not. If not, it is my life, and you can have the common one.[1]

I shall be back to-morrow night.

FROM MEMORY—JOURNEY HOME, *June* 1911.

The porter who woke me at six o'clock in the morning was not the cruel porter who, all ready for the Great War, I expect, had evidently been taught to "do in" the English. He had not ordered a cab for me, and he had lost the complicated paper of directions that I had secured at Cook's, with great caution, considering my slipshod ways. I got into the train, trusting to the officials to tell me how and where to get out. I think I was travelling third class, as money had slipped away on tips, beer jugs for A. P., hair-waving, musical scores, and accompanists. In any case, I think I should have travelled third to show off, having never before in my life travelled alone, except for a tiny distance. When I got to Paris—where I should never have got, as Cologne was the route—I found I had two or three hours to wait for the train.

[1] These were only beer mugs.

Therefore, miserable and incompetent, full of unnecessary heroism, I took my hand luggage into the cloak-room. It must have been a third-class cloak-room, for there were a lot of peasants with babies in their arms fainting with the heat. Leaving my packages, and giving them a parting stroke as much as to say, "You'll be all right," I dashed out into the streets of Paris to buy some lip-salve.[1]

It was not far to the chemist's and haberdasher, but when I returned my crocodile dressing-bag was gone. This was really the last straw. In it were my beautiful new stockings, crude green and fire-red; a treasured cigarette case, thin and long and platinum; Von H——'s real lapis-lazuli necklace, and the Kaiser's diamond bracelet, given to me officially when I went to Berlin—hideous, it's true, with its eagles and crowns, but worth a pretty penny. I am afraid I cried then and at no other time. I saw my train steaming away, as I felt I must wait and see a policeman. He was not an Arséné Lupin, but the head of something, and quite intelligent, though intensely suspicious of my provocative hat—the large one—as I could not pack it, and of my silly story about the lip-salve.

What I minded was the blow to my pride at not being able to travel without losing my way and my

[1] Men laugh at us for this fantastic habit of anointing our lips, but the word "salve" is not wrongly given in this case; it is a balm, healing to one's woes, which gives to one's plain face and white lips, and to one's parched lips at the same time, a healing.

worldly goods in this idiotic fashion. Needless to say, I never saw any of the things again.

My first appearance in London was not at all impressive. I remember going straight from home, where I had tidied up, in what my father called my "tadpoly frock"—that's to say, one with very wide reveres and a terribly tight skirt—to the Duke of Rutland's house, where a handful of thrilling people of Society and the Stage were rehearsing a quadrille for, I suppose, a great charity function. I felt utterly out of it, without the superiority of feeling, "What am I to thee, or thou to me?"

PART IV

OXFORD FRIENDS AND LETTERS

PART IV.

OXFORD FRIENDS AND LETTERS.

The Summer of 1911.

AS this ends the first phase of my studies in Italy—and it was here my aspiration received a check which made my actual work uneventful for the moment—I think it is a good place to say a little more about my friends who are mentioned throughout this story, for in them I have been always undeservedly lucky and infinitely privileged.

Mr and Mrs Asquith I have known since I was fifteen, through my mother and father; but my own particular friendship which led to my being constantly in their house originated in the fact that Lord and Lady Ribblesdale—she being Margot Asquith's sister—grew very fond of me and invited me to Gisburn to sing. I became great friends with her girls, and then with him. He taught me a lot about riding and lent me a horse occasionally—a great white horse that made me terrifically proud. The whole family praised me

and made an ass of me, and followed my fortunes with ardour. My friendship with the Asquiths, now Lord and Lady Oxford, developed later.

Margot couldn't bear me to sing professionally; she thought it would hurt the quality of my voice. Mr Asquith, though professedly unmusical, followed my movements with interest. I, in my turn, naturally worshipped him, and he became a tremendous hero and great friend.

After these two came the Oxford group; Hugh Godley, much older, and really a greater friend of Raymond and Violet Asquith's.

Then my own particular "year" of Oxford boys followed; some were younger than me, and had just left Eton. I give one or two of their letters.

Patrick wrote constantly, though not regularly, and it is unfortunate that the letters that are not too personal to print do not convey anything of his charm or genius for understanding.

With Patrick Shaw Stewart, Julian Grenfell, Charles Lister, and George Fletcher, called Hosges, I had a very unique kind of comradeship. They all loved me without being in the least in love with me. Perhaps, and only occasionally, the very least! They were all familiar and affectionate without ever touching the border where lovers begin and friendships end. They had all been at Eton and Oxford with A. P., and it was at Charles Lister's family's house at Brancaster

(the Ribblesdales had taken the Vicarage) I first met them, also Wilfrid Knox, the brother of Father Ronald Knox. This last, however, was too aloof to become a friend of mine; I think he thought that I disturbed the reading party, which in 1907 was grappling with Mods. I think they had just enough envy of the one that eventually carried me off to make it an amusing theme to touch upon in their letters to one another and to me; though none of them, except perhaps one, thought of anything but their brains and their careers and their families. They had terrific home ties all of them, which was one of their great qualities.

For those who had the miserable misfortune of not knowing them (for all except A. P. were killed in the War), I will describe them shortly.

Patrick Shaw Stewart was comparatively ugly. He belonged to the Elizabethan period, and would have been handsome then. He ought to have worn a ruff. Ribblesdale said he looked like Lord Darnley. He had a dead-white face, with pale red freckles, and red hair—straight and shiny. For the most part he laughed, but his eyes were extremely expressive when he was quiet. Most people did not understand him, and took his bluff for conceit. They thought he had no heart, but his letter to me on his mother's death proves the contrary; and when his friend—Edward Horner—fell a few days before him (or weeks), he lost

all zest for life. He always said to me, "There is no need to be killed if one is clever." Raymond Asquith once said of him, "All Shaws are charlatans and all Stewarts are pretenders; besides his nose is as sharp as a pen." But he liked him.

Most people have seen portraits of the Grenfells, so it is enough to say that Julian looked like a faulty Greek statue as regards his face—prize fighting, of which he was fond in early youth, seemed to have chipped bits off it—but an unimpaired Greek statue as regards his body; the most fastidious and least observant people could not have failed to notice the beauty of it when he rode or swam. I always think that Hotspur's description of Mortimer, who

> ". . . hid his crisp head in the hollow bank,
> All blood-stained with his valiant combatants,"

is an apt description of him. He was darker than Bill, whose hair was yellow, and "plumed like estridges." This is only an attempt to describe their appearance. Their nobility, feats of arms, and sweetness of character are known to most people.

Charles Lister, had he lived, would have looked a little like his father Lord Ribblesdale, but not so magnificent. He had the Tennants' obstinately curling hair, from his mother, Charlotte Tennant (Lady Oxford's sister). He had a curious, fumbling, and yet extremely courteous manner, and one felt all the time

"This will be a great man." He went in for diplomacy, and after beginning life as a Socialist—and even holding a meeting at Eton "for Russian sympathy," at which I sang—his political views reacted to the opposite extreme, and he became a strong Tory.

"Hosges" was the son of C. R. L. Fletcher, who wrote *The History of England*. Hosges had no particular looks, and thick straight hair that would not stick down. He looked very "nice." I remember there was a fuss early on in the Oxford days about his writing to me so much, and his parents were perhaps a little bewildered as to who and what I was, and Patrick wrote a brilliant letter of defence of me to Hosges's father, which contained the words "spiritual exaltation." I think that it was rather a remarkable thing to do at the age of twenty, because it might have let him in for ridicule, which the young can never stand. Patrick was full of concealed nobility.

From P. S. S.

Darling Viola,—You are very disturbing. Your first furious sheet almost finished me off with its ice and fire. I had just enough strength to embark on the second, which was an improvement, but not a good anchorage, and I am still tossing uneasily in rough

water. I don't quite understand the direction of your abuse; I was prepared for anything in reason on huffiness and nuisance, and am still wearing a hair shirt under my pyjamas on that very account; but it is all about my "tongue," my "lies," my "poisoned cups and parting shafts"—what, in the name of Heaven? Perhaps it was unworthy, but it is a very widespread human affection—this interest in the mutual relations of one's friends. . . .

And now for my quarrel, and this is a serious one. Three times you say in the midst of your wrath that you suppose you must keep me up for the sake of my intellect—or of yours! and you complain that I was no use to you at the Races because I was not bright. Now that is what I will not suffer. I am not very clever (except superficially), but I am very, very nice (not only superficially), and I am passionately fond of you. Now, if you are fond of me—even ever so little—I am very lucky and very happy. But I am not going to be retained on sufferance as a court jester, or a thinking machine, or a whetstone of the mind, or an *Enquire Within upon Everything*. I am not going to have you take me as hens take grit, to promote your mental digestion, and assist you to lay intellectual eggs. So there you have it, and this is deadly earnest. I'm disappointed and rather bewildered. What ails you? Of course I write to you as I would not to anyone else, and I always thought

(in my foolishness) that was rather fun. I don't know how much to explain—you never used to want things explained. Surely you must know that my rough letters are peppered with invisible inverted commas. Either you can't put them in for yourself or you can. Either you want to be written to like this : " Darling V.—How sweet of you to write! Your darling little snapshot is in a pale-blue frame on my writing-table, and I am waiting day and night for the Sargent.—Your devoted Boy." Or you appreciate what you're good enough to call " length and breadth and width." In the former case I am afraid that I'm no use to you *qua* correspondent, but I'll be glad to put you in communication with someone at New College or Magdalen ; in the latter case (which of course is the case, or I'm really stone dead) what's wrong ?

Weigh it well. There are thousands of New College and Magdalen and Cambridge men in the world ; and no doubt you can draw them all by raising your little finger or your fern-like toe—but there are jolly few of me even at Balliol (said he with arrogance, but perfect truth).

P. S. S. TO V. T.—*All Souls' Day.*

5 RAYMOND BUILDINGS, GRAY'S INN.

Why don't you write to me ? It is cruel, when you know what a dull life I am leading. . . . The leaves

fall at last, and the cold comes, and the marvellous year is over, while you no doubt are still eating figs and mulberries under your own vine and under your own cistern—and I suppose discussing war news. Are you a pro-Italian? Rather difficult to be, isn't it, for an anti-bloodshedder with all this bayoneting of Arab gipsies in the oasis, "*Stermigione dei Traditori*" and so on? Oh yes, they are good chaps, the ice-cream men, and the waiters, and the organ-grinders of your adopted country. But perhaps it is better than being good-hearted mugs like we were to the Boers. What do they say in Milan? A crucial place, of course. You get all the Socialism there, and a good deal of the prosperous middle-class jingoisms as well. This is a Charlesian paragraph, but I long to hear really, with an unwonted interest in public affairs. I saw Evan yesterday. He had a very Evanesque account of how he called on Rib., and found him with a table laid for two, and how you appeared blushing and hesitating in the doorway. You seem to have made a good impression on that rather strong soil. . . . My Lord Ribblesdale seems to have broken his journey to Rome rather solidly.

You must tell me a good deal about yourself—such as how your fortunes progress, and your voice perfects itself, and what you are feeling and looking like, and what colour your hair is, and whether you are thin at all.

I've just had a slight holiday, to go to All Souls', and elect New Fellows on All Souls' Day. We elected three miserable specimens, but no one jolly was in; and anyhow, by the strenuous efforts of me and one or two others, the election of a Polish Jew from Balliol, much the strongest candidate really, was prevented.

I saw Hugh with the Raymonds, genially melancholy. That was the night of the opening of the new spacious and rather crude Opera House. When shall I see you perform there? (Perhaps I ought to say "hear"—but the spectacular aspect jumps first to my tuneless mind.) All the boxes have ante-rooms behind, where one can sit and play picquet—a sound arrangement, I can't help thinking. Bless you. P.

From P. S. S. to V. T.

Ardgowan, Greenock.

Don't be too despondent of your literary gift. I dare say it'll return a hundredfold. My own theory is that your long and rather troubled foretaste of married life is the cause; but that's only a theory—it might equally well be through over-attention to music. Both rest on the simple fact that one can't do two things well at the same time. But as presumably your heart and your voice are both more important than your mind and your wit, I'm afraid I can't suggest a remedy. But you might take little holidays from time to time.

I am thrilled to know who the youth was who tolerated Sidney and Hosges, but execrated Julian and me. It always delights my oligarchical soul to feel that I'm really and truly disliked by the Balliol proletariat, though twenty years hence I shall probably regret it infinitely, and tell my son when he goes up "to make lots of new friends, my boy, and don't stick in the old Eton groove." Anyhow I don't see how any spirited inhabitant of Balliol can hesitate to dislike us cordially.

I'm just going back to Carnock and work from a nice but not thrilling party at "Ardgowan." The degree of pleasure I get out of a good grouse drive would surprise you. Perhaps it can be reduced to terms of snobbery (magnificence as displayed in abundant birds; armies of efficient and servile keepers; and moselle- or claret-luncheon in hampers); but then I also like the sort of shooting when one gets one snipe and puts it in one's pocket wrapped in a dock-leaf.

This is short, but I must catch a train. P.

From Julian Grenfell.

Viola darling,—Life, my dear—it's too good! Up at six; coursing before breakfast; food; shooting, with dogs ready to let loose at the wily hare; food; more shooting; food; hunting; food; fishing. A sort of nightmare of sport, with lightning changes from one branch to another. Tongs astonishing the

countryside with cartwheel kills all day. Grenfell making records for the river; Grenfell riding with some courage; Grenfell enjoying himself in pleasures of sport and wine (or rather beer). But alas! Bron,[1] the Bron, put his foot down about the woman, so the third pleasure of the Triad is docked. He did not want his retainers shocked. I don't know that it isn't a good thing really—"they allus gets in the way," even when "they aren't drorin'-room over." Life is good enough as it is. Back to the land. Simplicity, beer, and beef. God in a nutshell. Let a man live his own life.

I want to see you. Write to me. More about yourself. No wonder that you hate holiday-making if you make it in the country homes of old ——.

From J. G.

I am aching to see you again. It is a terrible thing, I have got your feet on my brain. It sounds uncomfortable, doesn't it? When I rise in the morning, and when I go to bed at night, there is always an unmovable impression of your feet in my eyes. It seems like D.T., but I don't think it can be, because they do not appear purple with mauve spots, but good English flesh colour. Now your feet are good things in themselves, but I assure you that it is possible to

[1] Lord Lucas, killed flying 1917.

have too much of them, especially when they are only visionary. I want to see them and you in the life, and that shortly. Is your Continental frolic over? And what are your plans? And have you developed the conventional prize-fighting prima-donna lungs? (which Heaven forbid).

I've been to Rowsley, where I had God's own time. I swear that all of you are without doubt "The Superior People" of history. It is almost too exciting; you are all quite unlike ordinary people—you are like the heroines of Greece and the popular novels. I said in my wrath, "All men are bloody drivellers, and all women are one degree worse." So they are, if it were not for you super-people. You are the only people who are obviously alive; everyone else is half dead, and already stinking. But you like all the jolly things, and are not afraid of saying that you like them, and do them. England can never sink while we've got a king like good King E., and while it is inhabited by a few such as us.

Write me a nice letter, about the superiority of the hobbled and their adherents, and about their old jokes, and about your feet and lungs, and other interesting portions of your anatomy.

From J. G. to V. T.

It has pretty well done for me missing you at Belvoir in your country form; but I had to go and see doctors,

and dancers, and dons. I can't bear your going to the Italians—I have only just fully grasped the fact; and Belvoir is pretty good when the spring gets the better of the Feudal atmosphere. And Oxford is practically death, with forty feet of clay and a slashing wind, and silly people expecting one to take degrees. However, I saw Alan last night and loved him; he cheered me up a lot. Have you been singing well?

From J. G. to V. T., *Wednesday*.

Taplow Court.

Dear Viola,—I keep it in mind that you are in London when I arrive early to-morrow morning, but your career will of course, and as usual, intervene at the critical moment, and prevent me seeing you. But if you can give me ten minutes' chat at any time (How are you, Mr Grenfell?), let me know at Arlington St., where I shall be. I will wait till the midnight bell if you can. As for being ordered about by me, never have I been put down lower, or more consistently, as recently by you, Miss Tree, and quite rightly. No, you were really very good to me, and you are a big woman. You are exactly like Bella in George Borrow's books (as I have said before—but it's growing on me). Now George Borrow's books are about the country, and very interesting to simple country-folk, although you, Miss Tree, who live in the town, will hardly

understand their charm; otherwise I had meant to give you one, bound nicely in a cheap art cloth. I hope you had a good rehearsal on Monday. . . . My brother Bill is here; he is the best fun in England.

Good-bye.

From Charles Lister to V. T.

The British Embassy, Rome.

I am very, very happy here, with occasional feeling of revolt and longing for quiet studious summers in London, seeing best friends, and wild hunting winters under a rainy sky, with green lushy fields, a good free-jumping horse, and his angry Lordship hauling me over the coals because his vile horses refuse! But the hunting here is jolly enough and the people kind. Officers jolly fellows. I talk Italian to them. Then I am getting to know a few people. This is a pleasant society, you know, though it may be rotten. . . . My bridge is a tragedy. This makes me sad, as I shall have to learn dancing. I don't like dancing. I feel far from "glorious" or "beautiful" when I think about it, but am in the frame of mind of a Voltairean Bishop. I should make a first-class unbelieving ecclesiast. Don't you think so?

From Charles Lister to V. T.

British Embassy, Rome.

It is delightful to hear that you are anyhow coming to Rome, and a most pleasant surprise for the "nice little gentleman." If you come here you must bring your habit, even to the exclusion of more apparently necessary garments, as the riding is glorious—miles of it. I wonder when my father is coming out. He's not been very definite. I fancy towards the close of the month. I shall be in North Italy later in the year probably. Otherwise, if you were not coming to Rome I would run up now.

Rome is very quiet just now, and not oppressively social. I don't think they really like foreigners here very much. Hostilities open in January, I fancy. I should think Alan is wise in not going to India. I looked in the Civil Service List, but missed him. I am glad the voice prospers so much. I am neuralgic at present, with the prospect of seeing you as the one star in an otherwise gloomy and rather pathological sky. I see the doctors almost as much as at home, and, like the poor, they are always with us.

FROM HOSGES TO V. T., *Wednesday*.

BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD.

. . . I have been torn in two ways by two opposing forces—one Commem., and the chance (only the chance) of seeing you; and the other Norway, salmon-fishing and the Midnight Sun. The balance has fallen in favour of Norway. So when you are whirling round the floor with Patrick shortly after two o'clock you will think of me standing on deck, with the salt on my face and the smell of the sea in my nose, watching for the rim of the sun to appear over a distant line of snow, and watching for the first glitter of gold on the waves of Trondhjem Harbour.

Then while the Brancaster eels are debating whether they should take the worm offered them on the end of your rude string, you will think of me with an eighteen-foot rod, bent double with the weight of a fresh-run thirty-pound fish, being dragged by the shining monster over crags and boulders, and cursing and swearing as one of my knees breaks after another, and perhaps eventually falling flat on my face and losing rod, fish and all, in the rapids of the river Orkla. Then August will see me in Switzerland, September in Scotland, where I shall see Patrick and other jolly people.

I expect I shall leave on the 20th—perhaps the day you come down—how sad! Viola, I hope I shall see

you again one day. Meanwhile I will write dull letters from Norroway and other places, and you will perhaps write jolly ones.

From Hosges to V. T.

Viola, does it amuse you to get letters ? I imagine it does, or you wouldn't provoke one to write by writing yourself. I love getting them myself, and that is partly why I write them ; it is partly, however, the love of expressing oneself, which is the same thing as conceit—and shows itself in my case by the love of hearing my own voice when I have anything to say—*e.g.* " Speeches " at Eton, though I don't much like speaking at debating societies and such like because I am utterly incapable of expressing my thoughts with any rapidity.

When you come out of dinner and find awaiting you an evening like this, what are you to do ? You want to find somebody else to whom you can say " How jolly this is." There has been a sharp shower of rain, which is over and has left a perfectly clear sky, and the glorious smell of wet things goes up and mixes with the afterglow in the west, making a perfect whole. The only other person who really appreciates this is the Evening Star, who is sitting on the top of one of the battlements looking at it all quietly and saying " What fun ! " I have often discussed the problems of life

with him, on the river at Eton, or coming back late from fishing in Scotland, and elsewhere. He always takes things quite calmly, but you can see that he thoroughly enjoys life.

Why do you send Alan obnoxious literature which he leaves strewn about in my room ?

PART V

SUMMER IN ENGLAND

PART V.

SUMMER IN ENGLAND.

EVEN if there had been opportunities to sing, I should have refused, as I considered myself not ready, and I had a quiet holiday at Sutton Courtney, where my mother had just acquired a barn and cottage, which she immediately transformed into a lovely home. This was bought later by Mr and Mrs Asquith, now Lord and Lady Oxford, and has since remained their country-seat. There was a great "feud" at the time, which took up a good deal of our lives and almost all our conversation.

I must have been up and down from London to Sutton Courtney, for I received the following letter from Mr Asquith on 20th July 1911.

10 Downing Street.

Dearest Viola,—When and where can I see you? Any time to-morrow, Friday, afternoon or evening, or Saturday morning? Where are you going for Sunday? [1]

H. H. A.

[1] We drove to Easton Grey and had a happy Sunday there, and motored back. The next day I drove him to Richmond Park, and

V. T. TO A. P., *22nd July*.

EASTON GREY.[1]

Dear,—I suppose it is full six months since I have written you a letter. The drive with Mr Asquith was amusing, but the question of you never arose, though I tried it from various quarters. His Secretary last year when I was here[2] is now Under-Secretary of State for India, and the one that was under him has had promotion, so now Bongy[3] is in as second best; you know him at the Bar. But Bongy is going to be made top, so Mr A. said he would ask Sir George Murray for a likely one, and Sir George had brought him a double-first Balliol man of twenty-five, already a widower. You see what they are: he said "All my Secretaries must be clerks of the Treasury." I despair a good deal; their duties seem only to be able to play bridge.

I'd like you to be here, and hear the terrible fusillade of questions they'd have thrown at you across the table. I am so unhappy, so really unhappy about you.

went for a walk by myself, while he thought out his speech on the House of Lords question.

[1] Mrs Asquith's sister's house at Malmesbury (Mrs Graham Smith), in the middle of the Blackmore Vale country.

[2] Edwin Montagu.

[3] Sir Maurice Bonham Carter, who married Mr Asquith's eldest daughter by his first wife.

H. H. A. to V. T., 24*th July*.

10 Downing Street.

Dearest Viola,—You cannot think how much rest and pleasure you have given me during the last forty-eight hours. I went to pay my visit to the Palace, and came away quite content. Then I went and lunched with another king! (Doesn't it sound grand?) This time, unfortunately, only an Ex-, and an exile! Poor little Manuel—late of Portugal. We fore-gathered at Winston's table, where also was Clemmie and the nice sister-in-law, Goonie (if that is the way to spell her odd name).

Thence—as Pepys would say—to the House of Commons, where we had a truly fiendish row; the worst, I think, I have ever seen. The baser young Tories tried to howl me down, and very nearly succeeded. Our men were with difficulty restrained from throttling Hugh Cecil, F. E. Smith and other bad offenders. I wish you had been there, it would have amused you.

Too soon yet to say anything about Wednesday, but you might write me a nice little line. H. H. A.

V. T. to A. P., 25*th July*.

All Souls' Place.

I told you that the "Prime" was composing his speech on the Lords yesterday afternoon; when he

left me he went straight to the King. I learnt this afterwards. Marvellous man! And we talked all the way of little things, as of course he must talk down to me.[1] If the Lords reject the Bill, they are going to create peers at once. I shall be sorry; I do hate to think of their great tradition going to the Swan & Edgars of life. I have asked him to move heaven and earth to come to us on Sunday.

H. H. A. TO V. T., *26th July*.

10 DOWNING STREET.

Away from Europe.[2]

"Though deep, yet clear: though gentle, yet not dull:
Strong without rage: without o'erflowing, full." [3]

H. H. A. TO V. T., *4th August*.

10 DOWNING STREET.

You didn't send the irises (Iris's poems). No time? There is always plenty of time. I loved and read

[1] Naturally Mr Asquith's letters and his conversation were both such as one might address to a rather undeveloped schoolgirl. I think that my complete lack of knowledge of fundamental things was what interested and rested him. He called my mind "an unweeded garden," though he did not continue the quotation, "things rank and gross in nature."

[2] This saying originated in Mr Asquith's having told me that the Persian Minister, after a crisis, had jumped into his carriage and said, "Drive to Europe." He used to refer to our drives together as "Drives to Europe."

[3] This was said to remonstrate with me on the subject of my shallowness of character, of which I had complained to him on our drive.

pencil letter. You'll come to lunch to-morrow ? The vocal chord is a real and serious problem. I sat in the Chair in the Cabinet for two hours to-day, and literally could not say a word. I had to use two human megaphones right and left. Guess who ? [1]

But, and this is serious, why am I reduced to numbness, dumbness ? Is it sympathy,[2] or is it revenge ? I am sure it is not a mere accident. You alone can solve the problem.

I will tell you about the star (Hesper Phosphor [3]) when I have recovered my voice. It still scintillates in an alluring baffling way above the not very distant horizon. Will it in time "Retrick its beams, and with new-spangled ore flame in the forehead of the morning sky" ? I hope so, but there are possible nebulæ. I could write, I think, a really good essay on "Pageantry." [4] I may have half a chord in action to-morrow, so come on chance.

[1] The human megaphones were Winston Churchill and Lloyd George.

[2] Mr Asquith had at this time lost his voice, and the "sympathy" refers to the fact that I also, from overwork, had temporarily lost mine.

[3] I think the "Hesper" or "Phosphor" meant that my next visit to Italy might synchronise with his travels.

[4] I sent H. H. A. the paper of A. P.'s English Literature Exam. for the Civil Service Commission which he was now taking. This paper included an essay on "Pageantry."

H. H. A. TO V. T., *5th August.*

GREAT MAYTHAM, ROLVENDEN.

Is the Huntress home from the "Hill," I wonder? And what kind of game did she find there? Fish, flesh, fowl, or what? But perhaps you are not in a voracious mood, and content for once with human nature's daily food.

I seem to be rambling, but I've been busy most of the morning over my speech. Perhaps, like the last, it will remain unspoken, not because I am howled down, but because I can't "speak up." My voice is certainly stronger to-day, though far from agreeable, either to use or to listen to. The worst of "vengeance" is that you can't always exactly measure its course—either in direction or intensity.

This is rather a nice place by nature, with good trees and a distant prospect of the River Rother. But it is still very much on the make—brick carts, half-built houses, baby avenues, and nursling flower-beds strewing the scene in every direction. There is no one here but the family, which is in some ways a relief; the house, which is immense of its sort, sadly lacks a library. Why should pointless and often silly rhymes jingle in one's head, and demand the name of their author? *e.g.* this morning:

"For all the books of Moses
Are nothing but supposes;
And as for Father Adam,
And Mistress Eve, his Madam,
And what the Devil spoke, Sir,
'Tis nothing but a joke, Sir—
A well-invented flam."

Do you know them? Write at once.

H. H. A.

V. T. to A. P., *5th August.*

Hill Hall, Epping.[1]

I wrote to you quite two years ago from here.

Mr Asquith has evidently "espoused" our cause, because all through lunch he asked me about the C.S. Exam. questions—when the results would be out, etc.—and he was very, very kind. It will be a real misfortune if you don't get near enough, as I know he is for us.

George Moore is the one interesting person here, and he has been talking of nothing but Crippen, whom he shares my affection for, and how his life might have been saved. He is very nice and clever; the others are cheerful bores.

Mr Asquith says the Autumn Session has given him three months' holiday, provided he is abroad, so he

[1] This was the beautiful house of Mrs Charles Hunter. It was always full of wonderful people like Sargent, and Henry James, and of Sargent's pictures and Henry James's books.

undoubtedly comes to Rome. He is wonderfully happy and thrilled with his political fun, but frightened of his throat, which he thinks I gave him as a revenge—because I have revenges and curses to distribute, you know. Margot has bought "The Wharf" herself, don't tell.

MARGOT ASQUITH TO V. T.

20 CAVENDISH SQUARE.

Dearest Viola,—Alas! H. can't go on Saturday, and he says I mustn't for I am not up to it. I'm truly sorry, but expect he's right. Will you thank your father very much. And take my advice about your lovely voice; don't train for vast places, but merely to reach the heart. MARGOT.

H. H. A. TO V. T., *8th August.*

EWELME-HUNTERCOMBE.

It is too disappointing and sad. You must come over *early* to-morrow (we will send) so that we can golf before lunch. Margot will be here but not Anthony, who has gone to Easton Grey.

It is a shame that you should be so near, and yet so far; I have lots to tell you, but not with pen and ink.

I feel rather like Christian (did you ever read *Pilgrim's Progress*), when the load fell off his back.

I thought the English literature papers capricious

and not very intelligent. Fancy giving a quotation from "Rejected Addresses," which not one person in a million reads nowadays.

You haven't got the "belles" right yet; will they take as much hammering in as the "Cool strong Thames"? [1] H. H. A.

V. T. to A. P., *8th August.*

Sutton Courtney.

Dear Friend,—I have a throat which I fear may end in disaster—I mean a week in bed. Listen, I think it would be politic (if I am well enough to go) for you to play golf at Ewelme, Huntercombe, on Saturday with Frank Lawson. He asks us both to lunch, but as you can't because of work, you could perhaps get there by three o'clock. He could send to meet your train at Wallingford. Daddy, I believe, comes Sunday, so it would be best for you to vanish into thin air on Sunday afternoon.

I send you the latest "Prime's" letter; I saw him to-day at Ewelme. You were always your best at golf; you could play in a foursome with him, or a single with Margot. I really think this wise, as he doesn't even know you, in case you got anywhere near into the Civil Service.

[1] "For though the daye be never so long,
At last the belles ringeth to evensong."
Hawes. (Temp., *Henry VII.*)

H. H. A. to V. T., *7th August.* (Sent to A. P.)
6.15 P.M.

10 Downing Street.

This is actually from the field of battle.[1] Although I did not call in your leech, I took a thick inhalation of some violet molten oil at the last moment, and Margot and all the women-kind affirm that, in perorating, my chords were ringing like a peal of bells. I suppose there will be a heavy reaction to-morrow to voicelessness, and "cold Obstruction's apathy." That doesn't matter, as it looks as if the curse had shot its bolt and spent its virulence. It was a near thing, however; remember for the future.

I got a delightful letter to-day, redolent both of Hill and Wharf. The best thing in it was that you stay till the 17th. We must try to arrange an outing this Wednesday afternoon. Let me know your down-sittings and up-risings. Is not it fun that we are prospective tenants of the Wharf?

I think I go to Ewelme for next Sunday; I count upon your being not "far away on the billow."

I loved your description of the over-rich mansion and host. There is, as you say, something to be said for £500 a year. How did the Exam. finish? Did you get a little scrap I sent to the Wharf?

[1] This means the House of Commons. See speech on "Vote of Censure," 7th August 1911.

I was fairly pleased with myself to-day, which is pretty rarely the case. I wish you had been there. I like to share experiences with you. I send this to All Souls'. Oscar Wilde borrowed from John Bright (Crimean War).[1] H. H. A.[2]

From an Article by Lady Tree.

Weekly Dispatch, 4th October 1925.

Another " black-out " of our acquaintanceship, and after years and years we meet again—beside the river in front of my Barn at Sutton Courtney. Margot comes, sees, and sweeps the situation.

" Buy up the whole—the adjoining land, the public-house in front, the private house next door, the cottages on the other side. Pull down the hideous hut, flood the garden, knock down the wall, and dam the river."

Somewhat nettled by her advice, which was little less than a command, I answered, grimly : " Since you are so clever, you do it." And do it she did. Showering my parting pantechnicon with gratitude and blessings, within a month she had made Sutton Courtney

[1] (Oscar Wilde borrowed from John Bright (Crimean War)). I asked Lord Oxford what this meant; his answer was : " I have forgotten, perhaps the angel of death and the beating of his wings."

[2] I should like to express my gratitude to Lord and Lady Oxford for allowing me to print their letters.

her own. But we grew happy and intimate over the transaction, and my poor little Barn in Britain is now her world-famous Wharf in Rome.

It was I who resuscitated the Barn—a roofless, floorless, wall-less wreck, the derelict of a coal-bargee's widow. My process was simple. Where there were holes I put planks, where there were gaps I put windows, where there were no doors I put iron and latticed glass ; so that the whole barn is almost all window, and it is in one of the widest of these windows, the river shimmering a few feet below her, that Lady Oxford has her bed and does her writing.

At whatever time she goes to rest (and she sits up late playing games—games, childish and serious, with equally incessant glee), be her retiring at midnight or at one or two in the morning, she always wakes at five or, at latest, with the earliest pipe of half-awakened birds.

A servant is told off to bring her dawn-brewed tea, writing materials are prepared close to her hand, and there, in the silence and solitude of morning, she writes, and writes, and writes. That is the way her autobiography grew ; otherwise in the overcrowded hours from girlhood to womanhood she could never have found time to write her diary ; that is the way her wonderful book about her children grew—that most lovely record of a mother's adoring love.

The Wharf, Sutton Courtney : now, how to describe

it ? By dint of converting three houses into one, demolishing the village inn, and making a dream-like garden out of a maltster's yard, a potato-patch, a grass-plot, a pear-tree, and a penny-a-landing coal wharf (hence the name), behold a country home beautiful, moulded by Margot.

From Memory.

This is perhaps the place to say more about the Wharf—then my mother's home, later Margot's. I have already given a description in my mother's own words. It was nothing but a lovely barn on the very edge of the river, with "landing 1d." written on it. The Barn itself remains practically unchanged, as Margot only strengthened mother's tastes. This and the new house, built by Cave, are now called "The Wharf." I said before that there had been a feud, though never between my mother and the Asquiths; the only point being that mother had intended to acquire the Wharf herself, but secretly sold it to Margot when she found the Lords of the Manor did not want her. My father never quarrelled, and was wise and diplomatic, but was firm over this particular incident which angered him by its pettiness; but I think he was the only one of us who was glad to shake the dust of Sutton Courtney off our feet, for it was very lovable dust.

H. H. A. TO V. T., *16th August* 1911.

10 DOWNING STREET.

I feel rather as if I was sending this out into space —like the dove from the Ark—but I am risking it.

I was very remorseful over my owlish intentions yesterday. I was really stupid; and I felt it more acutely all the evening when we sat in loose array in the half-filled stalls at the Haymarket, and yielded ourselves for the best part of two hours to the curious, but very real fascinations of *Bunty*. I wish you had been there. It was quite unique, unlike anything I have seen at the theatre; not "good though powerful," nor capable of being labelled or classified in any of the conventional ways. There is only one word for it—"delightful," from beginning to end; not a false note, nothing out of perspective. So you see you would have shared a real enjoyment, which is rare.

H. H. A.

H. H. A. TO V. T., *17th August.*

10 DOWNING STREET.

It was very refreshing to get your letter at Easton Grey this morning. Cast out fear! I came up here at cock-crow to try and settle this hideous business of the Railway Strike—and I am afraid I have failed.

It is a disagreeable prospect, but it has to be faced.

I am not sure that I envy you your present environment—but you enjoy it, and what more can be said? I am going back to Easton Grey this evening, but if this unrest continues, I expect I shall be a bird of passage for some time to come; in fact, until the "belles ringeth to evensong." H. H. A.

H. H. A. to V. T., 19*th August.*

Easton Grey.

I was disappointed not to get a letter from you. I suppose you have developed into a complete mermaid, and spend your time, not like the majority of your inconsistent sex, "one foot on sea and one on shore," but with both in the water.[1] This accursed Strike has upset everything, small and great. I spent no less than eight hours in the motor yesterday—four each way—and companionless on both journeys, except for thought and memories. And it was not to much purpose, for I fear that both sides are really spoiling for a fight; and if that is their mood, there is not much use in attempting to devise a reconciling formula—such as would be invaluable if their hearts were inclined to peace, and all they needed was to save their faces.

[1] I must have gone to the sea about this time to recuperate my voice. A few days at Margate completely restored it, so it cannot have been very bad. The rest of my holiday I spent at Sutton Courtney.

No one is here except ourselves and Mme. Haas. I sat in the studio after dinner last night, and for all my barbarous numbness [1] was impressed by her wonderful playing of Schumann and Chopin.

I am going to golf with Elizabeth this afternoon at Stinchcombe. I shall be back in London Tuesday and Wednesday. You will not be gone? Let me know, and how to find you—when you have put off your scales and resumed your human personality.

H. H. A.

V. T. TO A. P., *21st August.*

CLIFTONVILLE HOTEL, MARGATE.

I hate leaving you, but I feel somehow that it won't be for long, and that our next meeting will be at Sacro Monte, or even Rome. I am going to be so happy in my work. I know that, and my voice has quite come back. Fancy, you're going to Woking, the most deadly climate in the world! I have been with Daddy all the time, and Walter,[2] so it would be no good your coming here.

H. H. A. TO V. T., *23rd August.*

10 DOWNING STREET.

It was a cruel trick on your part to make this sudden flitting, and put miles of sea and land between us.

[1] Mr Asquith always professes to be quite unmusical.

[2] Walter Creighton, then my father's secretary, son of Bishop Creighton, a charming friend of mine.

I was counting on seeing you Tuesday or Wednesday, before you set out on your long journey. It is a sad disappointment.

It began to rain as soon as you left, and the leaves in their thousands tumbled to the ground—" the woods decay, the woods decay and fall "—and the bracken has taken a sober colouring, and is rapidly becoming sere and brown. Which do you like best—bracken green and full of sap, or in its russet autumn suit, the prelude to decay? I prefer it green. Wendell Holmes says somewhere that of all the senses—sight, hearing, touch, etc.—the one which most vividly awakens or recalls associations is smell. The smell of green fresh bracken will always bring back to me one of the hours I like best to remember, and to live over again.

Unlike so many others, you don't " cheapen Paradise." Do you know where that comes from? Perhaps I will write it out for you.

I can't envisage you, for I don't know your surroundings. H. H. A.

From my Father.

Villa St Hubert, Marienbad.

Darling Viola,—I wired my address. I wish you would write to me. It is not very lively here, cold and damp, and no interesting people here as yet.

Let me know how you are enjoying yourself, and tell me all your news. And are you coming out to me? Please wire as to this, so that I may arrange; then I could travel with you. But perhaps it would bore you. I can't stay even as long as I thought, for I shall have to meet Brieux in France. I have had a furious letter from him about various things, including my not having visited him on my way out.

I want to have a long talk with you about your own dear projects. I hate all this suspense for you, darling. Let us hope all will soon come right. Sometimes I feel very sad; but you have your splendid work.

I always wish you had played the blind woman in *La Foi*.[1]

I will write you a nice letter to-morrow. Only let me know your plans.

My father had gone off for his usual holiday in Marienbad.

Having finished the run of *Henry VIII.*, he was planning *Macbeth*.

[1] *False Gods*, by Brieux, produced the spring before I left. There was great controversy between my father and M. Brieux, whose fine play he said my father misinterpreted. My father, I think, saw in it only a beautiful idea and story, not an allegory on modern life, as all Brieux's plays are supposed to be. Someone should have told him; great men are too often surrounded by fools and sycophants.

Photo. by F. W. Burford.] [*To face p.* 176.

From my Father.

The Kreuz Hotel, Marienbad.

How nice for Mother to have you with her! Of course it would have been a great joy to me to have you with me, but I am glad you are happy. I am much more comfortable now, as they have given me a beautiful room at the Kreuz, on the first floor, and with a balcony. I was in a dungeon at first, but here it is beautiful, and I feel more than worthy of myself! Oh, it's too, too beautiful—I keep saying that to myself; and it's important for me to keep strong this year and do splendid work. I think very seriously about everything, as one does when there are not always disturbing humanities about one. Give my dear, dear love to the children. Your father, H. B. T.

Hugh Godley to V. T.[1]

Evistone, Otterburn.

My nose is bleeding, so I think I will write to you. I got a letter from you at Brussels, written on rather remarkable paper, and containing words of folly as well as pretty sentiments. It seems you are a mezzo, and not much of a mezzo either, so perhaps you had better come home before you are utterly forgotten.

[1] Hugh Godley was a very regular correspondent, but not during any of my stay in Italy, as he disapproved of it altogether, and, in spite of scornfulness was really more anxious, more encouraging, and interested than anyone.

Brussels was bloody—a great deal of work and solemn signing and sealing of international treaties with my Phil Kershaw seal. A certain amount of Maida Vale fun. An interview with the King. A gift of roses from "La Pucelle d'Anvere." Not much food or drink; I am glad to have got away at last.

I learned all about the rather sordid story of the Sutton Courtney property.

This is the place to be in. As I wake in the morning the sun breaks through great blankets of mist, and shines till it sets; and then the Aurora Borealis flashes its searchlights in the north, till it is time to go to bed. We bathed yesterday, but it was cold, cold in the water. The aspens are bright lemon-coloured, the rowans are flaming scarlet, the bracken is old gold, the grass is orange-tipped, the grouse are plentiful and strong on the wing. My nose is still bleeding. H. G.

PART VI

RETURN TO ITALY IN THE AUTUMN

PART VI.

RETURN TO ITALY IN THE AUTUMN.

Extracts from Diary.

HOTEL RIPOSO, VARESE.

I ARRIVED here the 3rd August, much too late; summer was gone. Did nothing but alarm the Italian peasants here by my height and my bad singing.

Thursday, 24th August.

Have been to G——o; voice a little worse than when I left him, but not on the whole gone back. I have to get it out broad, instead of in and pretty; not to hold my breath, and yet to control it; not to open my mouth wide until F sharp; not ever to tighten my lips, and not to change the position of the notes in the middle register.

Friday, 25th August.

Went to Varese to see Mme. Arkel. I begin with her on Monday. G——o to-morrow and Sunday.

Better to-day, though cold in the head. Wonderful remedy given by peasant here, also camomile last night, given by doctor. Went to sleep on the lovely road leading from here to the bottom of the Sacro Monte valley. Saw rare butterflies, and telegraphed Ribblesdale for implements. The telegram ran, "Please send small butterfly outfit." [1] Having dinner outside; Varese looks like Florence. Received another good letter from A. P., also one from H. H. A.

V. T. to A. P., *26th August.*

Hotel Riposo, Sacro Monte, Varese.

I love your letters; they help me a lot. I sing to the peasants at night to make me a little less nervous.

You mustn't mind me one way or the other. I am here for another ten days. Just come or don't come, as you feel. To-morrow I go to the Colonne—you know, at the top of the hill. Of course it is only now that I can stay permanently here, until Arkel begins her term again. I've hired a piano from people who are leaving, but only for ten days. I can't afford to go backwards and forwards for my lessons; it is two hours from door to door, and I have to get up at 6.30 to make all fit. Of course you must be in England when the results of your exams. come out, must

[1] He sent the outfit, but of course it caused a smile on his part, as I learned afterwards.

you—or mustn't you? I feel sure H. H. A. (Mr Asquith) would think so. He has written to me so sweetly, and I hope to keep him up. The question is, if you don't get through on the List, what are you going to do? That's what I want to know—be Daddy's secretary, or brave all and go to Africa?

V. T. TO A. P., *28th August.*

I am over-anxious and ignorant about the papers, and think that you oughtn't to leave until you know; and that, if favourable, you ought to be very much on the spot.

I spend a good deal of time with butterflies. Send me a killing-bottle, and, if possible, a net—cyanide of potassium at the chemist's for the killing-bottle. You are also ignorant about these things.

I am terribly excited about the £3 ticket. I've ordered your room on the first floor. Do arrive Saturday morning, as my Saturday afternoon is free.

Everything here is doubly as green as England, and of course nothing parched up at all. Go somewhere quick and bracing, not low-lying beside odious people who hate you.

H. H. A. TO V. T., *3rd September.*

ARCHERFIELD HOUSE, DIRLETON, SCOTLAND.

I enjoyed your letter very much, but I can only guess when it was written. A friend of mine had a High

Church acquaintance who put at the top of his letters "Holy Innocents' Day, 19 ——," to which my friend replied, "I have received your letter, which was *wholly innocent* of date." However, I don't mind so much about dates (by the way, did you ever get a little bit of paper on which I scrawled at the Wharf, and which I entrusted to your mother ?), but I was very puzzled by your picture of your way of life. I am glad that you are (for the moment) out of range of the donors of green stockings and their like. But what of the chemists and their nieces ? Are they an audience fit, if few ? And who is teaching you ? And, generally, how do you spend your days ? *More light.*

I am not sure that you have got "cheapening Paradise" quite right, so I send you the lines. Myers was not a bad guess. Of course, it is a thing not to do ; and I said you didn't do it. "Juxtaposition ?" How much do you think depends on it ? Not everything —but the real thing.

I am writing at my window at Archerfield, looking over the sea to the coast of Fife—in the library which you remember, where we read, or pretended to read, Dante.

I spent a delightful week at Easton Grey, in divine weather. Barby [1] was there, and Dorothy at the Rectory, and Montagu brought his magnificent Rolls

[1] Barbara Wilson, Lord Ribblesdale's daughter, married Sir Mathew Wilson.

Royce, and we motored into space, and I thought something of lost and wasted opportunities and . . . . Well, here I'm fixed like a limpet until, at any rate, 2nd October. So write at once, and often. Remind me—for I have half forgotten—of our talk about the shooting stars that divine night at Ewelme. Have you a Browning with you ? I think I shall try to write "An Englishwoman in Italy." Do you advise ?

H. H. A.

THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE.

Ah ! foolish woman—she who may
On her sweet self set her own price ;
Knowing he cannot choose but pay :
How has she cheapened Paradise !
How given for nought her priceless gift !
How spoiled the bread and spilled the wine,
Which, spent with due respective thrift,
Had made brutes men, and men divine !

COVENTRY PATMORE.

H. H. A. TO V. T., *15th September.*

ARCHERFIELD HOUSE, DIRLETON, SCOTLAND.

Dearest Viola,—I like your letters to be in pencil, but I can't say when the last one was written, as it is still "wholly innocent" of date ; but I identify it as the Ox (?) letter, because the second page is adorned with a work of art.

I was very glad to have your time-table. Rarely has a young woman's life been so scientifically mapped out,

down to the hours for butterfly-catching. I wonder, however, whether your catalogue is quite exhaustive; are there no lucid or perturbed intervals, when you try how your recovered or renovated voice sounds in a duet? I wonder. (On re-reading, I find that you say that you go for long walks *mostly* for butterflies, *which are rare*); plenty of loop-holes here, as I could point out if you were in the confessional box. Should you require absolution?

It is very delightful here, and not having to "drive to Europe" (alone too) every day, or even every week. My mornings have been much taken up by sitting to Mr Fiddes Watt, which bores me excessively. But the critics here think that he is making a good thing of the portrait. I have, thank God! a holiday from him now for a fortnight. On Wednesday we all—*i.e.* Margot, Violet, and I—went over to St Andrews, where they were celebrating the 500th birthday of the University; and in company with about 100 others from all parts of the world, I got an honorary degree. Two of my co-recipients interested me—Brandes of Copenhagen (you know his Shakespeare, etc.), and Robert Bridges, the poet, who has real distinction. Do you know I am a *Doctor* of *Six* Universities? Does that inspire any sense of awe? Yes, I like the "nebulous" charm and miss it much. Juxtaposition is a marvellous thing, but memory and imagination can play strange tricks, and almost make one believe in a real

presence. Is this "intelligible?"—or more deep than clear? I have just gone through another birthday, but I feel no older; on the contrary, younger distinctly than I did this time last year. How is that? Can you explain? Write again very soon, and very fully. H. H. A.

H. H. A. TO V. T., *26th September.*

ARCHERFIELD, DIRLETON, SCOTLAND.

We spend our days in speeding the parting and greeting the coming guest. "Still glides the stream," but the weir will be closed for a time next Monday, when I go up to London to start the Autumn Session. I shall, however, be here for most weeks for two or three days a week; it is a delightfully easy journey. Our most interesting visitors of late have been the Winstons, who have both taken ardently to golf. Barby is here, and Diana Lister, and for the last two days Lucy, who has been staying with the esoteric lady at Lytham. She[1] has lent me her book, with a long inscription. Surely the quest of the orchid never drove people into such strange and unattractive places before.

Write soon and tell me all about yourself—prospects, movements (actual or possible), thoughts, feelings, —everything. H. H. A.

[1] Mrs T. C.

FROM MEMORY.

A. P. came for a few days to that lovely spot, Varese. I was very tangled up with my guests—the starving old woman from my old pension, and Maria, of course, and going to Milan for my lessons. Sometimes he used to go with me, and sometimes he stayed on the mountain reading in the sun, and sitting on the edge of the Funicular Railway bank, hoping that the car with me in it would come up before the sun went down; but I, with my mistaken quixotism, often missed the train by having too long a lesson. Still, it did not seem mistaken then.

One morning A. P. fetched me from my lesson—from G——o it was, near the post-office; and as I came out he had the telegram to say he had just failed to take a high enough place for the Civil Service Exam.; and we felt that the world had come to an end. Except for the first moment of sympathy, I was probably angry and depressing to him. We went up at once to Sacro Monte, where Maria was waiting for us. I think he must have returned the day after to England, and I to Milan.

V. T. TO A. P., *28th September*.

MILAN.

I have had the following telegram: "Much sympathy, be of good courage, writing—Asquith." That

may mean a lot. Don't be precipitous, or even interested yet. I have been crying all the afternoon—crying for you partly, and for your presence. I should wait for his advice—Mr Asquith's—"Be of good courage" is so splendid. This must go to immediate post.

V. T. to A. P., *29th September.*

MILAN.

I have written a witty, sparkling letter to Hugh, which I ought to have done long ago, not mentioning you or marriage. I don't know what he will think. I have received no letters, I think because of strike. Milan is in a state of siege practically. I feel tired from despondency. I suppose you are arriving now. I adore the "City of Beautiful Nonsense," and I wish we could wait eighteen years before we were married, like those two, and then live in Venice. Our best times together are so like that, and like the Brownings.

Mme. Arkel said to-day that no artist must marry. She looked pretty sick about it, and I was only talking of another pupil; I got as red as fire, and cried a good bit too. *L'angoscia in viso, e l'angoscia nel cor.* I am glad of your beautiful letter and your beautiful love. Run quickly to my house. In my best bookcase you will find two books by Zola—one *Madeleine Feraire* and the other *L'Œuvre*—wrapped in a brown-paper cover. You will find great things there, and a

lot about our love, especially in the first. I can't think why you keep me in ignorance about your plans and doings. I know you too well to think that you are saving up for a great surprise. I have tried to decide to leave G——o or Arkel after next month, as you seem to suggest it. But how difficult to tell which is best! Arkel really did more for me up to a certain point, when you heard me first. G——o will get me high notes. Do tell me something about yourself. Good-bye. I am anxious and await news; do be quick. Daddy says, "I will see about Alan," and sends me a rather splendid letter from Bernard Shaw, urging me to sing now, and not to study; and saying that I was wasting myself, and that my voice would never be big like German voices.

H. H. A. to V. T., *29th September.*

Archerfield, Scotland.

Dearest Viola,—I was distressed by your last letter, but not surprised, for I had scanned the List, and realised that the name in which you were interested was not there. (By the way—not that other peoples' misfortunes are really consoling—I hear that poor Tommy Lascelles has failed for the Foreign Office.) It is more than tantalising to be so near, and yet outside. I suppose there is still a chance of casual vacancies among the ninety-three, through chucking, medical

veto, etc. Let me know about this, though I'm afraid I can't do anything, as these matters are regulated now by Rhadamanthine rules, and cannot be deflected this way or that (like kissing) by favour.

Why should the City be unthinkable? and shut out even interesting companions? or even ambitions? I don't believe in "obvious refuges." A shelter soon becomes a cage, and a cage (however well furnished with perches and good seed and clean water) a prison —from which there is no escape, except by an infinite lot of flapping and bruising, and sometimes not even by that. It is better to fly free, and trust to dodging the hawks and other birds of prey—to say nothing of the "not impossible He's" who may be hovering about. (I exclude those who make presents of green stockings, and adventurers, like the one to whom your poor friend has succumbed. You must tell me how that affair progresses.) So courage! "*Le Diable est mort,*" as the Burgundian says in the *Cloister and the Hearth*. But I want you to know that my thoughts are constantly with you in *your* troubles, as yours were with me in *mine*. And I know you won't "cheapen Paradise."

We have had Ilona Derenberg here; also the "Professor" (Raleigh);[1] also Nancy Cunard (aged fifteen), who has written a really remarkable sonnet; and now the Winston Churchills, and the charming

[1] Walter Raleigh, Professor of English Literature at Oxford.

Maud Wyndham. I go to Balmoral for two or three days on Monday, and will write to you from there.

V. T. TO A. P., *3rd October.*

MILAN.

Dear Friend,—About the "spose" [1] here, they are very interesting to watch. Cara is beautifully dressed,[2] but her hair badly, but accurately, done. Everyone here admires her tremendously. I consider him fairly good-looking, very intelligent, and a wonderful singer. But of course, to my mind, too typically Italian in character ever to be possible for me—no shyness, no reserve; pride of what is his, only caring to hear himself sing, and himself speak. Of course, I think he has lovely qualities—gentleness, and devotion, and

[1] The "spose" meant the engaged couple Cara and Bruno R., a Florentine, studying singing.

[2] Cara was Alan's first cousin and about the same age as myself, dark, and deep voice, glowing with health. She had a fine face, with strange light blue eyes. Her parents lived in a large house in South Kensington. She was brought up to things like golf and garden parties, and when, through my influence, I fear, she decided to give up the comfortable world and go in for Music, and marrying an Italian, they helped her for all they were worth; and her mother came out to see that all was as it should be. It was just at the time of the Tripoli War, and B—— R——, to whom she was engaged, might have had to go; but there is some law in Italy about the head of a family staying behind. They were married the year after this, and she died of a brain disease, which neither English nor Italian doctors could fathom, in her lovely villa in Florence five years later, leaving behind her two little Italian boys. Everyone loved her, and everyone was sorry; she was fundamentally good.

complete manliness. Later I think he will be like all the men here—Oriental—like the Turks they despise keeping their wives in black velvet clothes and hats, as dolls, and never letting them have the light of day, or flirtation, or singing, or work—except *fare mestieri della casa*, keeping house. He loves you, and says glorious things that make me glad.

Cara and I talked through the afternoon of plans, life, and children; she talked of the peculiar advantages and unselfishness of living without children for the first few years.

Listen: I had a jolly, funny, affectionate letter from Hugh, saying, "I have decided not to marry ——, but —— ——," and saying that Mr Asquith had said to Margot that I, Viola, had real grandeur of character.—Isn't it glorious?—but that Violet had refused to believe that anything of the kind had been said.

We're all very happy here, and if you came it would be complete. My voice is devilish good, and G——o devilish pleased.

I had a letter from the Hotel d'Italie, sending back stamps, and longing for us to return.[1] It was the best of our Excursions by Wordsworth, wasn't it?

[1] A. P. and I had one last expedition together from Varese to the Lake of Como. We spent the day wandering on the hills on the left-hand side of the Lake; and the figs, olives, and grapes were ripe, and we ate them as they fell; and came back at even, and dined at the little Hotel d'Italie off trout fresh from the Lake.

H. H. A. TO V. T., *8th October*.

ARCHERFIELD.

Thank you for your two nice letters. I am glad you found some comfort in mine. He will no doubt slip into one of the ninety-three vacancies, but of course it makes a lot of difference to what place, and to what kind of work one is sent. "Open Competition" is a fearful and wonderful thing and produces sometimes strange results. But *que voulez vous?* The highest Power of all "moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform," and petty man, in his turn, on a smaller scale and with the best intentions, executes odd capers and zigzags. But tell me how, in the long run, this is going to affect your fortunes and way of life.

Your Italian friends are not well regarded here just now. No doubt they have grievances, and their eyes have long been on Tripoli; but there are different ways of getting what one wants, and the short cut often turns out to be the longest as well as the roughest road.

Raymond and Katharine are still here; also for this Sunday Kitty Somerset, the Winston Churchills, and Diana Lister. Puffin [1] has developed a musical

[1] Anthony Asquith, Mr Asquith's son by his second marriage.

faculty, and composes for the piano. He gave us the first rough sketch for Op. 4 this morning. Barby comes to-morrow.

Alas! I shall not be able to drive to Asia (*via* Milan and Rome) this autumn. The world and its foolish inhabitants require too much looking after. When shall I see you?

I received the following letter from my father, when I least expected any disturbing element:

FROM H. B. T. TO V. T., *10th October.*

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

Darling Vi,—In frantic haste. . . . Do whatever is best for you in the long run. If you think the part brilliant, do it. Of course I would have it written for you—Noyes is to do the poetry.

I want Eurydice to sing the song from Gluck's *Orphée* quite seriously at the end. I am consulting an important person to-night. What I feel is—you ought to be doing something. If you make a huge success, it can only do you good. But choose yourself, and don't listen to dilettanti.

V. T. to A. P., 11*th October*.

Milan.

Dearest,—I am in trouble, as you probably know, as to whether or not to accept Daddy's offer for *Orphée*. Tell them at the theatre to send the score, otherwise I can't do anything about it. Of course Maria and my teachers are terribly against it.[1]

V. T. to A. P., 12*th October*.

Dearest Boy,—What about this thing at His Majesty's—shall I do it? G——o and Ricordi are for it; Arkel and Maria against. G——o says, "*Mai rifutare danaro, figlia mia*." Maria says, "*C'est beaucoup mieux de mourir de faim que de faire cela*." The scarf you sent her was lovely. I will send the pages of *Otello* as I find them.

Do tell me about Phyllida (Phyllis Neilson Terry),[2]

[1] My father was producing, as his Christmas venture, *Orphée aux Enfers*, by Offenbach, a new departure for him. I think Beecham had told him about it. It was natural that he should want me to sing in it, and I expect Shaw urged it too.

[2] On 10th October A. P. wrote to me that he had seen *Romeo and Juliet* with my mother. He said of Phyllis Terry as Juliet: "I think, on considering it, it is one of the most beautiful things I have seen. I got an extraordinary clutch at the heart in one scene—where Romeo is leaving her early in the morning. He flings open the shutters; the room is flooded with light, and outside the window in the distance

and her being so wonderful. If only Daddy would realise it.[1]

I have your letter, and love your work. Meanwhile you are on the make, dear creature.

V. T. TO A. P., *13th October.*

I tell you frankly I am bored to death with the lovers. Partly perhaps jealous that they are together, partly just hatred of their idleness. They sit huddled up on a sofa, not touching each other, smoking and eating chocolate in slabs. They then say, "Some time we must go out." And instead of going to bed at nine, they sit on the sofa smoking till eleven or twelve.

My singing is exquisite, but amateurish! This young man may have to go to the war on the 20th, so starts for his native Florence to-morrow. In that event he marries Cara there, if her father telegraphs affirmative. To-night, however, we all go to *Aïda!* I'm not going to do comic opera; no one wants it

there is a little Italian town. Then he goes back to Juliet (in a yellow crepe-de-chine night-gown), and she clings round him and will not let him go."

[1] My father realised very soon, and engaged her for every play after that. If he had lived, I believe she would never have left and gone off into the provinces.

except me and poor Daddy, but I want to gain money. Good-bye.

V. T. TO A. P., *14th October.*

Dearest,—I went to such a wonderful opera to-night —*Concita*, taken from *La Femme et le Pantin* by Louys; you ought to read it. Cara's mother is the one I like; she never contradicts or smokes. I think it is the smoking that really bores me, and a gentle knocking off of the ash on to the sofa cushions. But then I'm in a bad state—oh yes! I do feel inclined to chuck all, terribly, and that's why I regret the *Euridice* thing, for I feel it would have given me a tremendous interest, and kept me for ever from respectability. I don't know that I shall do anything much, there are such hundreds of good singers without me. I think Bruno most faithful and sweet to Cara, and she to him.

V. T. TO A. P., *16th October.*

To-day I am all for the *Euridice* again, because I feel discouraged by the future, and Daddy wickedly says: "Of course I will give you an enormous salary, and you could be married at once." I should be so exquisite in Watteau bacchanal, voice fresh and inebriated. Tosti's final ridicule,[1] and notes of exclamation at

[1] Tosti was sarcastic about my singing Offenbach's *Orphée* after Gluck's *Orphée*, which had been my last appearance before I left. Of course all the people who thought highly of me were against my

Offenbach after Gluck, made me decide against it. Walter must be and is, I think, mad. My telegram of refusal was, "Music for coloratura voice, Ruth Vincent better." Walter answered, "Dear Viola, I am doing my best,—Your affectionate Walter." Ricordi is a great financier, and only wants me off his hands until I become famous. I go up to "re" in scales with G——o. My "si" natural is lovely, but my "A" bad. Keep your eyes open in the theatre for any sign of Daddy saying "My God!" Maria wouldn't even let me look at the score until after I had sent a telegram refusing. I only read the score in bed. What does Walter want? He is one who hears all the little petty gossip against me, in and outside the theatre, and would know how much mud would be cast. Yet if I don't do it, won't the mud-throwers say, "Oh well, she's even too bad to be in that!" or "Oh, she gives herself such airs as that!" Look at this letter I had from Denhoff, or rather Daniel Meyer:[1] "Miss Tree quoted such ridiculous terms that it was quite impossible for me to consider her."

singing (*a*) the frivolous music unsuited to my voice and character; and (*b*) my appearing before my voice was really solid. And those, like Ricordi, who didn't think I was exceptionally talented, were for my doing what my father wanted—the least trouble for them, and getting them into his good books.

[1] A copy of my letter to Mr Denhoff, who, I believe, was to have run the opera season with *Rosenkavalier*, was enclosed in last letter to A. P.

What about clerkship ? How is Mother ? Happy ? And how is Felicity ? I wouldn't worry about immediate income so much as immediate grandeur of position. We can get immediate money from any old place.

Dear Mr Denhoff,—Thank you for your letter. I am sorry that you will have nothing for me in your future season. The reason I asked those terms last year was not for my sake. I assumed that you had asked me to sing because of the attraction to the public of my father's great name. On that assumption, I asked what I thought I should have been worth to you, and to have asked less would have been to pay insufficient respect to that name. One day, when I have done a lot of work and improved, I hope to be independent, and as such much less exacting.

VIOLA TREE.

V. T. TO A. P., *17th October.*

Now listen. If my hesitation is deplored, say it is because I hadn't realised that the music of *Orphée* could be adapted, also that I had an unfavourable answer from Denhoff. That is the truth. Mr Asquith telegraphed for your address. Now I trust you to go to the theatre, and knock the heads of Walter and Daddy together. Say, "She is inclined to accept, unless you have got someone else very good. What salary,

etc. ? And how long for, at the outside ? She is going to sing to Fano, ordinary impresario, on Friday, to see how near he thinks her to her *début*. If he says, "a month or so," then she stays ; if he says, "she must wait six months before her *début*, then she will sing *Orpheus* for the sake of money and time." Keep that in your pipe and smoke it, as they say. Daddy is a clever one, Daddy is ! But Walter is a doomed idiot. If they wonder why I write to you, say it's because you know all the ins and outs here, which is natural. My voice is a dream, my nose a sieve.

Cara not returned from Florence. However, by the time you get this, you will either have been stupid about it or clever. Don't, for God's sake, be pushing with Mr Asquith. You know his character, and how he hates any form of wire-pulling or unstraightness. If I don't push at all, it's because of this—*sentiments les plus profonds*—I hope you'll understand.

V. T. to A. P., 19*th October*.

Ribblesdale has come, and is perfectly charming. He says that there is a rumour that the Prime Minister is coming here to hear my *début*—this all over London. Aren't people odd ? Of course he was coming, but foreign powers and principalities intervened. My love for you to-day is something quite exceptional ; I think it's having talked to Ribblesdale,

and discussed the question from every conceivable side, of your life, and mine, and his. When I arrived at his sitting-room in the lovely Hotel Cavour, looking rather improper and extraordinarily beautiful, I found Evan Charteris there, places laid for me and Ribblesdale, discreet waiters, flowers, etc. However, we both, luckily, took it and felt it as an immense joke, and did what we could to augment the bad impression. At the opera there they were again—curious creatures!

V. T. TO A. P., *20th October.*

Dearest,—I love being with Lord Ribblesdale. He whistles and sings Sousa's Marches, "Cherry Ripe," and Mozart aria. Terribly impressed with my singing, which is *a merveille*, I must say.

I went for a drive in a carriage and pair, and felt very much like a heroine in a Tourgeniev novel with my large hat. R. admired its form and feather, but I forbore to tell its origin (that you had chosen it). We went to *Fendalismo* last night—Grasso [1] twice as wonderful as usual.

[1] Grasso will be remembered as a famous Sicilian actor. He founded a company of Sicilian peasants, who danced the Tarantella, and wrote and acted their own plays, almost as the Guitrys do now. He came to England before the War, and played *Otello*. I watched him with my father. One or two things he did were quite wonderful. He leapt on to Iago's back when he wounded him, and stabbed him in the neck like an animal; but of course my father deplored the lack of poetry in his reading of things like "It is the cause, my soul."

Lord R. now talks of getting Charles here instead of going there.[1] Of course, I'm only too glad.

V. T. TO A. P., *22nd October.*

Are you interested in the changes in the Cabinet? I am, enormously; I was surprised to see about M'Kenna and Winston.

It is untrue about H. A. going into the House of Lords, I hope, and know.

Charles is here, and Ribblesdale. And we eat the most miraculous food. Cara is really a wreck, from grief at B. having to go to the War—grief and mosquitoes (chiefly mosquitoes). My new idea is miraculous. R. has written a sonnet on my hat, which I left behind at his hotel. The sonnet was in favour of a Cossack's cap.

Good-bye. I am afraid it means no clerkship if the Autumn Session has begun—"when in the session of sweet silent thought . . !"

V. T. TO A. P., *31st October.*

Bruno has come back, and Cara is in the seventh heaven. In a few days she is leaving for good, for Florence. Lord R. and Charles dined, and Mme.

[1] Charles Lister, it will be remembered, was as great a friend of mine as Lord Ribblesdale. He was attached to the Embassy at Rome, under Sir Rennell Rodd. This must have been just after Lord R.'s very bad hunting accident.

Marazzi, the keeper of the pension, had her yellow dress on, and looked like a wonderful great chrysanthemum. Cara's mother talking of Sir Hubert Longman to Lord Ribblesdale; Charles to Cara; I to M. Marazzi at the bad end of the table. Lord R. said, with such a delightful sweet smile, talking of heads, that "your 'Parsons' has such a lovely rise to his head,"—it was so prettily said.

Yes, I wish you would get on with one of those good professions; the clerkship can't be coming your way, can it? It's too late.

Look out for houses when you are about. The Nicholsons would be such nice friends at Rottingdean, but too expensive journey. Lord R. wants us to have a house like Mrs Bridges' in Brighton itself—Georgian, facing sea. They can be got for a penny. What do you say to that? Von H—— has just come in. Look out for houses in high hills in Surrey. But this is only if you get a good appointment.

To-night, *Tristan*; I go alone.

H. H. A. to V. T., *7th November*.

10 Downing Street.

Dearest Viola,—My silence, with which you rather reproach me in your charming letter to-day, was not due to forgetfulness or lethargy. But I knew (both from yourself and others) that for the last week or

more your days and hours have been peopled with congenial guests, and that for the moment you had neither time nor inclination for more English. But now that your visitors have vanished, and you are once more exposed to the full blast of stocking-givers, etc., I must send you two or three lines.

I don't suppose that you are really getting what you call "fat," but I should like to judge with my own eyes, if I could only drive in the direction of Persia, through the wicked, atrocity-mongering country in which you have pitched your tent. I see no chance of any such luck, and I console myself with the thought that you will come to Archerfield at or about Christmas.

Margot and Violet come up from Scotland to-morrow, and we shall all be here for the next fortnight. The Autumn Session is a nuisance, but I take things as easily as I can. I miss companionship, and never take a drive. I saw the King yesterday after a long interval; he starts for India on Saturday, and is full of excitement.

V. T. to A. P., *12th November.*

I had a wonderful lesson from Cara's teacher, whom I have only been to twice. I am leaving G——o, on my return to Italy. He is no good, though having shown me one or two things.[1]

[1] At this time I had three teachers, which of course was folly. They all had the *bel canto* method, but they each had a separate theory about my voice.

Charles Lister to V. T., 16*th November*.

The Embassy, Rome.

Thanks for your jolly letter. I had a good account from Lord R. of your journey to some place beginning with P in glorious sun and a *wagon-lit*. . . . It is good news about your *hochgestifest* in March. I am afraid I shan't be able to be there, except in spirit, the flesh being confined to the Chancery of H.M.'s Embassy.

I shall shortly be journeying northward to purchase things; we might perhaps make a date. But this cannot happen until Tyrwitt, the new boy, comes out. I shall probably go to some smallish place for choice, *e.g.* Bologna, and we might have a Sunday together, either there or Milan. But this is all *en l'air*. I wish there were no work here, only riding and archæology, and you and M. M. out here in the spring. But I suppose under such conditions I should never want to leave Rome, and it would unfit me for this job. To my disgust, the weather has been so summery that I doubt if we shall hunt yet awhile, and my horse lives regardless of expense. It is food for tears.

I have come to various conclusions about myself lately. I used to think that I was the strong man—seldom troubled, and feeling deep.

I now think the opposite is the case. I am suscep-

tible, very, and quite incapable of profound or at all developed feeling. I don't know which it is best to be. Hercules between the two poses! Well, *basta* about self. You would like the Austrians here, they are quite white. And their contempt for the Italians—it is a thing by itself!

Read about the Mithras cult if it comes your way. You might be a sun-worshipper to-day. I believe you are one.

I have lived the quiet, riding, working life except for the disturbing element which has come into life with house-hunting. I have at last found a very nice unfurnished flat for myself and boy, who is shortly coming out as honorary—a notable pianist, but oldish, older than me; still I think the *ménage* will go well. I have in the course of negotiations had a crashing row with my house-agent, who has behaved in the basest manner. He is a charming Yid, and I was full of illusions as to his virtue; but the pestilent Hebrew has now fallen from his pedestal, and I feel like Othello—sick at the thought of the faith I had in him. I'm not sure you didn't tell me that the point of Othello was more disillusionment than sexual jealousy. I think it is true. Yours, C. L.

V. T. TO A. P., *16th November.*

I do hope that the *Morning Post* will come off.[1] It means living in London because of late hours, doesn't it? Or will it only be a once-a-week article on books? Are you to be an office-boy, to clean the printing presses? Or a classical scholar, to be appealed to when *Sappho* is quoted? Or a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles at weddings and bazaars? You see how my vulgar mind runs to publicity at once.

I have Camilieri[2] three times a week. He helps me a great deal, but he doesn't think much of me. I've come to the conclusion that I shan't have a big voice, though G——o thinks so, and Cara's teacher thinks so. I think my chance is to go for beauty and not size, though I am disappointed myself, as you know I thought it would be a thumper one day; but you can never tell what marriage will do. Cara has set her heart on a beautiful *appartement* here, the ceilings encrusted with gold, like Buckingham Palace—£120 a year. Twelve rooms, and I probably taking three or four. I can depend on letting to students, I think,

[1] Robert Ross had mentioned A. P. to the editor of the *Morning Post* as a reviewer of books. This was a great interest to him, and he kept it up until the Government work crowded it out.

[2] It was about this time when I began to work too hard, and with too many teachers. I read the Jenny Lind book, in which I found that she practised high B's for hours, and I thought myself safe, forgetting that my voice was not at all placed.

Photo. by Varischi & Artico.] [*To face p.* 208.

in the winter, if it would appeal to you as a summer palace, like the Empress of China.

I do hope your next letter will be a long letter. I am getting so sad ; I love to hear your business.

From Memory.

The next thing was a telegram to A. P., dated 19th November, saying : " See Bruno about voluptuous *appartement.* Deadly disappointment, darling. Wire immediately." This meant that both prospective husbands had set their faces against the responsibility of taking an *appartement* in Italy, when plans and money were castles in the air.

From A. P. to V. T., *19th November.*

A. P. in the course of a letter about this said :—

I have been explained the situation regarding the *Morning Post.* It is that they think it would be fatal to try and rush the man into giving an answer. B—— can now and henceforth guarantee me two columns per week—one Monday, one Thursday. I had no idea of your " deadly disappointment." Your telegram was rather like most foreign telegrams—a little hard to understand, the word " mausons " occurring twice. Of course, the objections against the scheme that I have to urge are very obvious ; it is obvious that the

time that I can spend in Milan during the year is inconsiderable. In that case our bit of the *appartement*, which, according to Cara's map to Bruno is biggish, would be in a continual state of being let. Bruno, like all Italians, rather hates Milan as a place. £120 a year for Italy is, of course, a lot, and of course to us, unacquainted with facts and the whole scheme, it seems a biggish thing to start on.

V. T. TO A. P., *20th November.*

How I love your letter! I read your articles with great interest. How good the Lear one is. Max's book is too divine,[1] and he is damned lucky. How like my good jokes some are, and yet how far behind his lag my best jokes. Oh, if only you could do that; but I would envy and hate you—no, I wouldn't, because it is genius.

V. T. TO A. P., *28th November.*

CARLO PORTA 3, MILAN.

I am sorry about Bruno and *appartement.* Do try and bring him round. Of course, he is *bon garçon* really. The *appartement* is so perfectly beautiful.

Cara's teacher says my voice is a Brünhilde voice.

[1] *Zulieka Dobson*, of which A. P. said Robert Ross had written such an amazing review about the heart that should not be mistaken for a pip on a playing card.

You seem in high, high spirits, so I needn't write you much of a letter. Cara is going home, and it's all over about the house. Please send the *Morning Post*. I had a lovely long letter from the P. M., all political. It said that all Europe was waiting to hear Edward Grey's words to-day.[1] What were they? I have just heard the two acts of *Thaïs*. I think I could have sung it as well; of course, for the acting—poof! I heard two acts only so as not to be tired, as to-morrow I sing to Ricordi.

V. T. TO A. P., *3rd December*.

I am reading *Herodotus*. I do love his sense of humour. Do be the Censor of Plays; I feel it is well paid.

Ricordi went off well, and said I could *début* in February or March.

I can't see you much when I get to London. Couldn't you come back to Italy with me? I am going to Belvoir on the 23rd to 27th, and Archerfield from 27th to 31st, and back for the rest of the time. I arrive on the 19th, at five.

I have had a beautiful letter from Bernard Shaw. I know you will love it, and send it back to me. Do

[1] This refers to a speech made on 29th November in the House of Commons by Sir Edward Grey, then Secretary of Foreign Affairs. The speech was of great interest and importance, as it dealt with Britain's attitude to the other European Powers.

send me the Yeats I asked you for—*Countess Kathleen.* Will you, by the by, come to Folkestone and meet me? We can have the long journey back together—not, however, if you are busy, dearest. That evening I shall be so tired, and want to talk to Felicity about Geoffrey. Are you going to play for me for Hammerstein—*Mephistopheles*—the usual aria? [1]

When other people say, "Viola doesn't give back anything, she just receives," it is unjust, because I do give back companionship. Don't say I am an egoist.

V. T. TO A. P., *12th December.*

CARLO PORTA, MILAN.

If you can get Harold Samuel for the whole of Sunday morning, the 24th, all well and good. If not, you must play for me. I will rehearse as much as you like, but I must have you or him. Listen: the Byron review was wonderful. You see I always read them first in the paper, and I tried to hope that Byron was yours, but didn't dare.

I come *train de luxe* if the crossing is bad. That will leave me Thursday, Friday, and Saturday

[1] My father had arranged that I should sing for Hammerstein for his opening season, if he liked my voice. He had just built an opera house (now the Stoll Picture Theatre). My return to London had, therefore, nothing to do with *Orpheus*, which I had already refused, but with my audition to Hammerstein.

to practise in. I shall sing the *Fanciulla del West*, *Mephistopheles*, and the Jewel Song from *Faust*, because it is the only thing Americans know.

Old Hammerstein is bound to take me, but I don't want him to till the autumn.

Good-bye, dearest, till I see you. It isn't Calais, I know, so it must be Dover—if you see what I mean. Mother seems fond of you. No Yeats received; one clinch with Bumpus would have done it.

I had now added to my repertoire the *Fanciulla del West*, *La Traviata*, and *Faust*, and a part of the *Rosenkavalier*.

FROM H. H. A. TO V. T., *26th November*.

ARCHERFIELD HOUSE.

Dearest Viola,—We have crept away here for an interlude of peace. The Battle of Life begins again to-morrow, when Grey is to make the statement for which the whole European Press (the most cursed of all human institutions) is stretching out its long ears. I was interested in your report of your conversation with the *Avocato*. The simple truth is, of course, that the Italian peasant soldiery, maddened by what they thought to be the grossest treachery,

got out of hand, saw " red," and for a couple of days ran amok among the Arabs. We should have had less lurid pictures of the " atrocities " if the Italian commanders had dealt more tactfully with the newspaper correspondents—the vainest of mankind, and capable, like their employers, of doing infinite mischief. However, that incident is closed, and not likely to be repeated. But, as I told you at the outset, your friends have got a wolf by the ears in Tripoli, and there will be a lot more biting and blood-letting before his teeth are drawn.

The main things of interest have been the supersession of A. J. B. by one Bonar Law, and the revival of Suffragettism. There is a good deal of mystery still as to how the first of these events was brought about. No one, of course, believes in the pretext of broken health and advancing age; he was never better in his life. All one can say from the outside is that he left them in the lurch, and that they well deserved to be so left. The women, after a truce of nearly a year, have characteristically broken loose just when their prospects of success were brighter than they have ever been before. Dabbling in politics has a fatal effect upon the neurotic and hyper-æsthetic members of your sex.

I saw Ribblesdale for the first time on Thursday; he is making a wonderful recovery. Margot has been buying furniture for the Wharf. Puffin is now at work

on Op. 6 of his musical compositions. Write again soon.

FROM MY FATHER, *12th December.*

HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

Dearest Viola,—I am so delighted you are coming home. I send you a letter from Raymond Roze.[1] They sent to inquire whether you knew *Hansel and Gretel.* I think I shall see Hammerstein myself and talk with him. Meantime I have written to Raymond Roze, saying that I think much depends on your first appearance, and that it might be as well for you to appear in *The Girl of the Golden West*, or as *Louise.*

All is going well with the American lady, though her accent is a little thick; but I have safeguarded this by the dialogue. I think *Orphée* will be a great success. Do come in time for the dress rehearsal, which will be on the 19th.[2] I have been tremendously busy, as you can imagine, and am looking forward to the holiday.

[1] Raymond Roze was the son of Marie Roze, the singer, and was composer and conductor for the plays at His Majesty's Theatre for some years. He afterwards directed an opera season of his own, and invited me to sing. But unfortunately it was no longer possible for me to take the engagement.

[2] I think this influenced my decision to come to London.

BERNARD SHAW TO V. T.,

29th November to 3rd December.

(*In such moments as I have been able to snatch.*)

AYOT ST LAWRENCE, WELWYN, HERTS.

My dear Viola,—I know all about that wonderful, perfected voice. I knew a man once who pursued it until he was within six months of conquering the world with it. He used to practise in Broadwood's piano stores in Pulteney Street, secretly and at night. He had not been satisfied with opera engagements—with Sarastro and Marcel and applause. On the very brink of the realization of his dream the Truth stepped in with scythe and hour-glass; and lo! an old man lying dead in University College Hospital, and an elegantly dressed young Parisian in tears and perplexity saying, "I am his son! If only I had known!"

Viola (you are only a viola, and he was a contrabasso profundissimo) how can you be so deaf? Don't you know that there are no perfect voices, and never will be? Don't you know that the teachers who profess to manufacture those voices (just one year more, whilst the guineas last) can't sing themselves, and can't shew a single pupil with such a voice? Don't you know that when —— appeared as a pupil of ——, and —— as a pupil of ——, they simply paid for six lessons, and the right to make the announcement, with perhaps a cadenza or two, and a little

correction of their Australian and Liverpudlian pronunciation of French and Italian ? Don't you know that the people who know how to sing may be divided into those who taught themselves, and those who were taught—like de Reszke and myself—by their mothers ?

Since you are interested in the subject, let me tell you where my teaching originated. An Irishman named Lee wanted to teach singing in addition to the piano. He went to all the teachers, and found that they knew nothing about it—talked of "*voce di testa*" and "*voce di petto*" and COULDN'T SING ! not a man of them. He dissected throats—men's throats, women's throats, and birds' throats—and found out exactly what the machinery was, but not how to use it. Then there came to London, and in due course on tour to Dublin, one Badeali, a man of advanced age, with a voice as fresh as a young man's. He could sing a note and drink a glass of wine at the same time. He could sing the Count di Luna's stuff (he was baritone) as easily as Leporello or Don Giovanni. Lee watched and listened, got an instinct for his tone, and knew what he was doing with his throat. He formed a method. He taught my mother. She is a mezzo-soprano ; and she can, at eighty, sing a B flat as easily as you can, with the purity of tone of a young nun. She had to give up singing at seventy, because it is so ridiculous to see an old woman sing. She taught me

when I could not produce an audible sound (in the right way, that is), to sing as well as a man without two pennyworth of physical endowment can be made to sing. Consequently, I know what can be taught and what cannot; and I know the tricks of the trade; and I can most positively assure you that every night you spend off the stage, every note you sing without paying audiences listening (bar your scales in the morning), is a night further from success, and a thousand-pound-note-worth of youth and beauty thrown away. You'd better by far sing "Annie Laurie" on Margate Sands, and take a collection in your hat afterwards, than sing "Una voce," or "Bel raggio" for the fiftieth time at a professor's piano, and dream of paralysing the Scala with it next year. *Next year never comes:* remember that. "Credit given to-morrow" is an instructive Italian trattoria sign.

On my way back from the Tyrol in September I passed through Bergamo. I went to the opera—*Gli Ugonotti*. Valentine, a dark, handsome young woman, of the Maida Vale Jewess type, but Italian. Well, had she waited for perfection? She could not even sing the notes. Duet with Marcel: famous passage sustaining C above the basso's "*Ah non pentirti*," etc. left out. Cut without a word. Chromatic scale of two octaves from C to C in the great duet in the fourth act calmly omitted. Able at best to sing a fairly presentable B natural, when the

tenor was bawling the house down with it. When I last heard Christine Nillson as Valentine, the effort that the high C in the "*non pentirti*" passage cost her wrecked her so completely that she could hardly place another note for the rest of the act. Titiens, after warning a friend of mine against forcing her chest voice above middle G, took to *La Favorita*, and ruined her own voice in exactly this manner. They all talk as sagaciously as your singing master. When it comes to singing they have to do what they can. The Italians, as a rule, sing worse, and teach infinitely worse, than any other nation in the world. From Patti to Melba, all the best technical singers have come from—of all places—America and Australia.

But anyhow, don't try to become an Italian singer: that is, an impostor. Remember, English peculiarities are qualities just as much as Italian peculiarities. To be lovely and slim and ten feet high is a whole bunch of qualities. Hardness (as you call it) is just as much a quality as velvet. Melba, who began as hard as nails, was as successful as Trebelli, whose first phase as Maffio in *Lucrezia Borgia*, the first time I heard her, still remains in my memory like a delicious ripe plum. You say fright hardens your voice. Then in the name of common sense, O irrational Viola, why don't you take steps to get over the fright by singing in public—were it only at a street corner (where I learnt to speak in public)—every day? You must assert all your personal

peculiarities as merits and qualities, and not intimidate yourself by being ashamed of them as defects. All this nonsense about your marrying means simply that a mother's voice is richer than a virgin's voice; but a virgin's voice, like a boy's voice, is a very wonderful thing; and the singer who has not sung with it in the years of her first delicate and slender beauty has lost as much as the singer who has kept it too long, and let the change to motherhood escape her. I don't want to drag you back from Italy if you like living there, in spite of the difficulty of hearing any nice music there except opera. But be patriotic. Your pride must be pride in being English. You must succeed as the beautiful Englishwoman. Your voice must be an English voice, and your genius an English genius. I am an Irishman—intensely proud of being Irish (quite unreasonably)—and I know. You must get your soul free, especially from the ideas of music masters, who always live in one room (crowded with a grand piano), and never escape from it except into a concert room or opera house, where they don't even pay for their tickets. The whole world should be too small for a great artist, whose main characteristic is to be at home anywhere. I have no more paper left to be wise on, unless I take another sheet, which would delay me another month. So *a rivederla !*

G. Bernard Shaw.

PART VII

CHRISTMAS IN ENGLAND

PART VII.

CHRISTMAS IN ENGLAND.

From Memory.

I MYSELF must have been pretty confident at this time about my singing, and about A. P.'s career, for I had embarked on the taking of apartments, thinking that I should spend six months of the year in Italy, singing, and six months in England. I suppose I had a fantastic idea that, if one were a Melba or a Patti, domesticity and children were just incidents in one's flight, as a butterfly might lay her eggs.

I came home on the 19th, and A. P. met me, as we had planned, at Folkestone. I was just in time, I think, for the first night of *Orpheus in the Underground*. The heroine, a well-equipped American, sang very well, and the eighteenth-century setting arranged by Walter Creighton, with touches of Reinhardt richness, was good. But the play—which was not Alfred Noyes's libretto, as my father had said, but by Norton and Harry Graham—failed from being neither one thing nor the other. It had not the scurrilousness of a revue, nor the beauty of the poetic plays my father put on.

It was thought by my father that if I took the part—fresh from Italian conquests—it would create a new interest. As a last struggle, for I was really too conceited to think that it was good enough for me, I telegraphed to Ricordi in Milan, to ask if he could assure me a *début* in Italy in the spring. He wired back very dryly: "Can't assure anything, accept *Euridice*." Whereupon, torn by ambition, conceit, and desire for immediate money, I accepted. I think they gave me £50 a week—at all events not more, as they had to pay the disappointed young lady £50 a week as well; but it was much the biggest salary I had had at His Majesty's, and I went to Belvoir Castle, where I was staying for Christmas with the Rutlands, with the score under my arm, and the design for my clothes. I studied it in a week. My father went to Russia to see some productions, notably Gordon Craig's *Hamlet*, and I can't think how I got through the rehearsals without him. He came back for my first night, and I remember hearing his voice from the box shouting "*Bis*, *bis*," for the Bacchanalian song at the end. And in this song I certainly had a great success, and had a music-hall offer of £200 a week when the run ended, which it did in about six weeks. My joining the cast had been of no avail, a great expense, a disillusion to myself and my friends who believed in my serious future, and not a few days of broken heart for the American lady.

To digress for a moment here—I am certain that no good has ever come of turning someone out of a part in which they have appeared, or for which they have rehearsed. I could give instance after instance when the second choice has been less good than the first, and when the play has failed. Unkindness always makes for failure. Bernard Shaw was very much against my taking up the part and usurping someone else's place. But he saw me in it, and thought I had improved tremendously, and was indignant at my scorning the music-hall offer, which I did, thinking, poor mug, that I was out for bigger game.

H. H. A. TO V. T., *9th January* 1912.

10 DOWNING STREET.

Alas! I start early to-morrow, not for Asia, but for Hybla, where honey is produced on the shoulders of Mount Etna; and I cannot, therefore, "assist" at your *début* in the lower regions. What a sharp curve in your career! almost—is it not?—at right angles with the line on which it was proceeding, without haste or rest! I pray for you the best of good fortunes, and beg you to write to me not later than Thursday, to Hotel Villa Igieia, Palermo, Sicily.

H. H. A.

H. H. A. TO V. T., *26th February.*

10 DOWNING STREET.

Just got your letter, and in the intervals of strike-averting I hasten to send a word of reply. Why all this nonsense about downfalls? No one knows or feels more surely than you do that there has been, and is not, and will not be anything of the kind. It is only that I have been cursed (I believe you *did* put it on) with all sorts of ill-lucks that have driven me from pillar to post, and fettered me as much in what ought to have been my resting as in my working hours.

What exciting and perturbing news you send me![1] It takes time to realise, and will take longer to measure in all its meaning and consequence. Meanwhile I will say with all my heart, God bless and keep you! I must see you before I go. H. H. A.

FROM P. S. S. TO A. P., *26th February.*

8 BISHOPSGATE, E.C.

My dear Alan,—The fountain of your daily bread has this morning the appropriate function of setting one seal upon your good fortune.

In my emphatic, repeated, and sustained assertion of your unworthiness, you will doubtless be the first to concur; to the heroic perseverance of your four years' Laban-service no one can testify to a closer

[1] This meant that my engagement to A. P. was to be officially announced.

observation than myself. God bless you in your undertaking, if He is half the God I am led to believe. Yours, PATRICK.

LORD RIBBLESDALE TO V. T., *15th March.*

CAVENDISH HOTEL, 81 JERMYN STREET, S.W.1.

It is indeed not difficult—nay, easy—to see that you no longer, etc., etc.

I assume that the zeal of your appointment has eaten you up.

After a search for Zobeia's ring, only equalled in history by the efforts of the Polar search party for Franklin, the twain of All Souls' Place confess themselves beaten; so this incident is closed.

I've not seen these admirable women [1] since you left, but I propose to visit them very shortly—perhaps this evening.

The Seddons—I say! I know not what you would have done about it had you been in London—grovelled in sackcloth and ashes at the feet of the Home Secretary and the Sovereign. I'm sending you the *Daily Mail.*

Shame that such a man as Seddon should be taken from us.

I seriously think it a grave thing that such a verdict should have been possible on such an incomplete chain of evidence and the public ignorance.

My impression is, that he did go away with Miss

[1] Felicity and Iris, my sisters.

Barrow;[1] still, when it's a hanging matter, intuition won't do. It's difficult to see, too, why Mrs S. should have got off scot-free. Evidently an attractive woman, and she kept her face to the jury! Between them, too, they evolved good-looking children—a service to the public not to be underrated.

To-day I am going to get my tickets for Milan, and I leave this on 23rd unless coal strike intensifies and affects travellers.[2] Yours, R.

[1] The murder by the Seddons of Miss Barrow, said to be by means of fly-papers administered in cups of tea, is described by Mr Filsom Young as being very important in the history of Criminal Law: "All the evidence in the Seddon case was directed against him and his wife; in fact, the evidence upon which Seddon was convicted pressed just as hardly, if not more hardly, upon her; but the jury convicted him and acquitted her."

"The Counsel for the Crown was The Right Hon. Sir Rufus Isaacs, K.C., M.P. (Lord Reading), and for the prisoner Sir Edward Marshall Hall."

[2] I must have written to Lord Ribblesdale about this time, and told him that I was pretty ignorant about *The Pilgrim's Progress*, as he sends me the following beautiful quotation, with a note to the effect that this was the pilgrim song, when "struggling through an uncomfortable country of giants, hobgoblins, and evilly-enchanted fiends. Mr Valiant bursts forth to this effect, and even Mr Despondency joins in:—

"Who would true valour see,
Let him come hither;
One here will constant be,
Come wind, come weather.
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a Pilgrim."

This was about the moment of what the *Times* calls the last act in the constitutional drama of the House of Lords question, when the Commons rejected the amendment by the Lords, when the "Peers wrangle in the last Ditch," as the headlines said.

Lord Ribblesdale in his Speech to the Lords said, "With Tariff Reform on your back, and the House of Lords round your neck, you will never win the election. The game is up; it is time for us to beat a dignified but determined retreat."

Lord R. sent me the cutting from the *Times* about his speech, on which was scribbled "Approved by Miss Viola Tree."

PART VIII

SPRING IN ITALY AGAIN

PART VIII.

SPRING IN ITALY AGAIN.

I RETURNED to Italy, which I considered as almost home, in the spring; I think that I must have arrived about 1st March. My lovely sister Iris, who was fifteen years old, was with me; she was coming to study drawing and music, and I was looking after her.

My engagement was announced about this time, for all my letters were full of amber beads and yellow shirts, bridesmaids and furbelows.

V. T. to A. P., *3rd March.*

Carlo Porta 3, Milan.

I thought to-day in the train that it would be the last time I travelled back not married to you. This climate is like wine, already not cold, and I've been drinking its wine to make me well. My voice sounds glorious. Do send the prints, those French ones you bought at Brighton, for my new *appartement*, but quick!

You must get me the Dolly dyes—most important—they are to dye our curtains with. I am going to have a lovely bedroom, though quite small.

I send you the correspondence of congratulations. I've kept back the ones like Mrs Patrick Campbell's, that I must answer; but all the others can be yours, you are so good at them. I am afraid you must keep them all, because of invitations to the wedding. Mother insists on having everyone, because of Daddy's great position, an event in his life, and so on.[1]

From V. T. to A. P., *5th March.*

How sickening that I didn't get a real good chance in London this last winter! Mme. Arkel could have got me *Fédora* and *Werther*, if I hadn't been away. Isn't it sad! But that's one of the things that happen. I must really leave no stone unturned now. What shall I do? I daren't bother the Covent Gardens of life any more. Plunket Greene wrote and said, "I suppose you won't bother about your singing any more," which is pretty good, isn't it? I have a black mark against him for that—revenge.

[1] It is very unlucky that my mother's letters have disappeared. She sent me the *Times* each day, and later, when A. P. began to do his reviews, the *Morning Post.* My mother had all the trouble and thought of the wedding on her hands, and her companionship with A. P. at this time must have been wonderful. They used to walk in the Charing Cross Road, and the alleys leading from it, finding prints and maps and old scrap-books; they also went together to see churches and houses "against" our wedding.

Our *appartement* [1] is too wonderful, quite small and unpretentious, but so perfect! We're going in on the 15th.

Dear darling, I am too tired to write you a good letter, having just come back from *Königskinder*. It was marvellously given; I loved it, but not as much as you do. Perhaps I am not musical enough.

I long for the other ring. This is the only thing I haven't lost. I lost my white vellum box with Lord R.'s ring in it; [2] and yesterday I lost £6. I don't

[1] Maria had found a delicious *appartement* in the Via Pietro Verri. It is one of the small streets leading to the Piazza Della Scala, a very old street, full of greengrocers, embroiderers, and cobblers. From the front windows one could nearly touch the carnation pots of the windows opposite. There was a parquet floor in the drawing-room, which was really a lovely room, and my first attempt at doing a room myself. It has become a model for all my rooms since. There was a little attic floor where the servant slept, this being "Speranza," whom I had rescued from the pension where we were. She had a great personality, the capacity for passionate devotion. She was a perfect maid, cook, and sewed exquisitely. England spoilt her sunny temper, but she has made her way, and is now very successful and happy, as a lady's-maid to the rich. [From memory.]

[2] Lord R. lent me, rather than gave me, as a sort of trophy, a ring given him by Zobir Pasha—a pigeon-blood ruby, rather a dirty colour, exquisitely set. I left it in a sort of pedlar's box of odds and ends, ribbons, gloves, and silks, on the seat in the train. Whether it was the excitement over the responsibility of Iris, or sheer scatterbrainness, I don't know; but the box was stolen. It was returned three months later from Marseilles, without the ring. It looked as if it were returned from the Orient. I often attribute my bad luck, and the bad luck of the owner of the ring, to the curse of Zobir Pasha over the loss of it.

know that he will forgive me. Don't forget to see that my debts are paid.

Last Sunday was Carnival at Laveno. How I should have hated it without you!

V. T. TO A. P., *8th March.*

If only I were not always too tired to write! You see I work pretty hard at singing, and then go and look for carved wood, swags of fruit to paint, and papers for the walls. To-day I am tireder than usual. Darling, listen: I have ordered some shirts, white and thin, with low necks—do you mind? I hope you don't. I think I look so nice, like a pure sort of boy in them. But you always hate white.

Have you seen Garrard's miracle yet? Will you ask Garrard if it hurts the ring to wash it? Do go and look for Lord R.'s ring in my room, in case I left it behind. I am dreadfully unhappy about it. I am terrified that it is actually stolen. He is so wonderful, and only wrote: "The ring is of no importance except what pleasure it gave to you to have it." Speranza is coming to us, and we are terrified that Mme. M., whose maid she is, will have the law on us for bribery and corruption.

I can hear Ludovici's voice in the next room. I have not seen or spoken with him since I came back, because I heard he was cross with me for not having written,

and I thought this so idiotic and un-understanding of him.

I hope to have found a good teacher for Iris through Fano.

I find that I can give this *appartement* up in a year, but of course I shall be very sorry to do this, as I love having a *lien* with Italy, though I doubt if it wants to have one with me! my height, you see, is against me.

V. T. to A. P., 8*th March*.

About presents, no jewelry. Ask for all the things for the house. Books and pictures will be the best kind of presents. What we want are crystal wash-hand basins and jugs—anything *at all* made of glass; old brocades or new brocades from Gorri; cushions of linen or of silk; and ordinary things like egg-boilers—they are such a bore to buy; pianos, music, bath salts, candlesticks. If I must have jewelry, I prefer rings; my neck is always best bare. Pictures are the best things for us. I expect something from William Nicholson and Sargent in this line. I feel rather penitent about the *appartement* here. I am terribly worried about other things: supposing they actually did engage me for *Sieglinde* in the autumn at Del Verme. I haven't sung yet, so I don't know. Do help me. I think it is better to count on that than on Harry Higgins next summer. He'll probably take a

year or two before he engages me. Perhaps I ought to abandon all thought of my *appartement* here, yet it would be so lovely to rest in the winter. I *am* worried.

V. T. to A. P., *12th March.*

Dear,—We are going to *Norma*. I shall probably write to you from the theatre.

Later.

I didn't; we were too taken up with oranges in the interval. I loved the opera, and of course it was perfectly sung—Burzio, whom you have never heard. The *appartement* is very good. We could make the dining-room into another bedroom. My bedroom is smallish and greenish, and leads out of the drawing-room; and out of that is a red-paved little dressing-room with a tiny window—I fear not good enough for you to sleep in, but lovely to dress in. I don't know what to do about furniture; an arm-chair is thirty lire and a chest of drawers is fifty lire.

Iris has begun her drawing. Ludovici is pale and wan and does not speak to me.

Telegram to A. P., *13th March.*

My God! No.[1]

[1] This *cri de cœur* was against taking a house in Park Village, as it was too near Crippen's canal.

H. H. A. to V. T., 10*th March*.

Hurstly, Lymington, Hants.

Ever since you left I have (like St Paul at Ephesus) been after the manner of men fighting with beasts—"gorgons, and hydras, and chimæras"—as Milton says somewhere. The struggle is not over, but there is a Sunday pause, of which I take advantage to tell you that in the midst of it all I have been thinking much of you, and your fortunes, and future, and what the Potter's wheel is going to make of it all. I think you have done and are doing right.

We had a great function at Covent Garden on Friday, when the Party gave me a lunch, and all sorts of nice things were said of and to me. It was really moving, and I wish you had been there. Do you know Francis Thompson?—

"We pass, we pass, we pass; this does not pass away,
But holds the furrowing earth still harnessed to its yoke.
The stars still write their golden purposes
On Heaven's high palimpsest, and no man sees."

Write quickly and fully. H. H. A.

H. B. T. to V. T., 19*th March*.

His Majesty's Theatre.

I hope to see Alan to-night. Do tell me about the wedding—whether you would like it a large and fashionable gathering, or whether you would like it to be quiet. Of course, marriage is a solemn thing,

but then people's ideas vary so much as to the way of carrying solemn things through. Of course, I suppose your sisters would love the pomp and circumstance of a great wedding. But do tell me, darling, what you wish.

I'll write again to-morrow, taking both your letters as my text. I'll think of you before I go on to-night. God bless you, Viola dear. Your father,

HERBERT TREE.

V. T. TO A. P., *15th March.*

About pianos, I suppose you loyally said "Broadwood." I should like that as well as an American Steinway, or a Blüthner, marvellous for accompanying, out of one of our cheques. We must have two pianos, or it won't look like a musician's house; and we do want the Toveys of life, don't we, to come and play?

It is quite dreadful about Ribblesdale's ring. Draw up a musical programme; remember it's a Wren church, so we ought to have Gluck or Haydn. I think that a good chunk of the *Creation* sung would be glorious; also that famous thing of Sir H. Parry's, and I think, to walk out, only Grieg fun, no pretentious *Tannhäuser*.[1] I would have loved as hymn a real

[1] Grieg's Wedding March, which Sir Walter Parratt played; but my father's orchestra from His Majesty's, led by dear Mr Schmid, got in the *Tannhäuser* first. I wouldn't start till I heard the Grieg.

[*To face p.* 240.

German folk-song with words, not sad, glad. What about the splendid hymn out of the *Miracle* (Humperdinck) for the end ?

V. T. to A. P., *20th March.*

This is the first night in the old home, that I am bound to say is almost irritatingly beautiful. It has Empire furniture throughout—not paid for ! as I tell you ; still we hope for the best. It has chrysoprase knobs on some of the doors, and is bathed in sun and echoing with street cries. I step over to Fano's every day, to hear news of the world ; and he steps over to me for a cup of tea. I have a fresh fit of discouragement because of a wonderful woman's voice here, or rather at Bergamo, a beautiful town, with a *citta alta* and a *citta bassa.*

I am going to sing to a very important man this week, who will very quickly settle my fate. And I wrote to young Percy Pitt for Helena in *Mephistopheles* —wasn't it brave ? And the answer was that Mme. Melba would no doubt be doubling the parts ! Such is life, as they say.

You ask me about G——o. No, I don't go to him any more. He wasn't any good. One day, when you came to hear me there, I happened to be singing rather well, that's all.

V. T. to A. P., *26th March.*

Darling,—I have not written to you for days; I am so dull and sad in consequence. I hate everyone in this life, including darling Lord Ribblesdale. I may go to stay with Mrs Hunter in Rome for a few days, to see him, and Charles, and the *grande monde*. I am afraid that auditions here may stop it, however. But I could meet some of the impresarios at Rome under the auspices of Tosti.

I found some wonderful houses in the *Morning Post* announcements yesterday: one, "Georgian house in Westminster, low rent." Of course that may have been Vincent Square, which I still love.

No; no ring yet. But I will go to the post to-morrow. Claude Lowther is going to give me the most beautiful ring. We might go to his Castle [1] for our honeymoon, or Gisburne,[2] or Wharf.

V. T. to A. P., *26th March.*

You want to know about my work. This is the first moment I have had to rest since Ribblesdale was here, and I am in consequence not a little tired; as they say, in fact, I haven't rested enough.

[1] The castle was Hurstmonceaux Castle, Sussex, which Claude Lowther had found as a ruin, and made by his own ingenuity into a fairy place.

[2] Gisburne Park, Lord Ribblesdale's country-house, bleak and Georgian, but hanging over a lovely river, and full of fine pictures.

I am so glad you are loving your work, and I am loving mine. This week I give up Arkel every day, and take to alternate Cara's teacher and Arkel. Cara's teacher is so wonderful, but says I ought to have a big D, and that I sing all falsetto on the high notes, and too pretty. "Your voice must be pretty but supported, and twice the size." Fano is giving me a letter to an impresario in Rome, where I go on Tuesday. It is such a pity, I shall miss Tosti. I suppose he is angry with me about *Orpheus* or something, for he never writes to me now, or perhaps it's about marrying you.

Dearest, I love the building scheme,[1] and Ribblesdale said he would "pull out" a thousand if Daddy "pulled out" a thousand and I "pulled out" a thousand. The worst of it is the thousand of mine, once a round sum, must be dwindling to £500 and £600 now. Of course ours wouldn't have to be so big or so costly

[1] There was a letter from A. P. at this time, enclosing one from Goodhart Rendell, the architect, about a building scheme in Westminster for the younger ones who were marrying; I think the M'Kennas and M'Larens were to be part of the scheme, and all share in it. A. P. at this time, and very rightly, was worrying over my concentrating so much on the house and its furniture, which tired me for work. Also he deplored my keeping one teacher secret from another, as well as an accompanist secret from both. Of course he was entirely right, but I only followed my own free-will, which I am afraid in my case was not so much "majestic instancy" as dogged obstinacy. In one of A. P.'s letters, dated 29th March, he said that he was in the House of Commons when Mr Asquith's voice broke down; he said that everyone was so sympathetic that it was wonderfully impressive.

as the others, but it would be terribly satisfactory, if "this palace of music I reared" (Browning) were to come to pass.

A lovely colony of people for you, but of course it's always best to build when you've been married a little time first, to see (*a*) if we have children; (*b*) if we get on with one another; (*c*) if we make any money.

V. T. to A. P., *2nd April.*

I can't tell you how I love my ring; its beauty is dumbfounding. Dearest, you must have spent so much money on it, it makes me sad; but I don't care, I love it.

V. T. to A. P., *2nd April.*

Dearest,—I am hoping that Rome will do me good. I shall see Tosti and make masses of auditions. I have been to Fano to try and pin him down, but no one is dependable but Ricordi, who either says, "No, no good," or else, "Yes, at four o'clock on Friday."

To-day is Saturday, and people like Ludicar, the man we heard in *Rosenkavalier*, came in, and also Fano, and a few poets. And it seemed we talked very nice intellectual, or rather artistic "shop."

I shall not be chaperoned by Mrs Hunter. As she hasn't offered, I am going to a pension with Speranza, so I don't expect to be asked out very much, as people

there are so prim, especially at the Embassy. But I am having a blue brocade for Rome—very deep, cruel blue—in case I need it.

I don't know what to do about bridesmaids. I am afraid the girls (sisters and sister-in-law) will be disappointed; and yet Lord Ribblesdale says I shall look so splendid without any. Iris says she doesn't mind. I try not to think too much about you; it seems too important a moment; each time I hear a good voice, the more rotten mine seems. But I only know how bad it must have been when I started, and how could I have had the courage to begin again?

Your ring is so lovely—so deep, and bright, and *surrounded* with diamonds. Didn't Mother think it lovely? or didn't she see it?

V. T. to A. P., *5th April.*

In Train to Rome.

I'm sorry you didn't care about my coming here. Was it a trace of jealousy? or really because you thought I should waste time? The Ambassador goes away the day after to-morrow, so it will only be Ribblesdale, Charles, and Tosti, and wonderful, wonderful Rome. Of course I love it better than Florence or any other town.

Later.

About me, I am afraid I am not so successful as you. My voice sounded big in a huge theatre, and they said, "*Belle voce, calda*," and left me. You see, they hear many voices like mine, probably, and why should they choose of such a terribly out-of-the-way stature and personality? I mean, I am almost a freak, in my gestures even. Until I am a real good singer I shall be a white elephant! which bothers me dreadfully. You see, I have "many enemies in Oraino's court, else would I very shortly see thee there"—in London, I mean!

I am going to see Tosti, for the first time here, this morning, with a tale of woe about it. Last evening I went to see that gloriously beautiful Princess Teano (Vittoria Colonna), and she has asked me to dinner to meet Italians. Everyone thinks my dresses too beautiful for words. I do enjoy this society. It is terribly full of scandal, and almost duelling, and people lolling back in carriages—like Ouida's books. I love to say I am going to be married very soon. They all look surprised, and are angry at my trying to start two careers at once! Well, but it won't be at once, as far as I can see. I am pretty far off this singing business.

V. T. to A. P., 10*th April.*

Rome.

Charles is giving us the most beautiful bit of brocade —purple. It is very rare, as there is no purple brocade to be had. Mrs Hunter thinks Sargent might give a drawing of you as a wedding present—good. She has asked us to lunch on the 18th of June in London. Doesn't it excite you to think it is only two months off? Tosti thinks I can make arrangements to sing here next winter, and also at the Abruzzi in September. If one has a voice, everything is influence; I know that now. But I am determined to *début* before I go back to you. How can you ask me not to think ahead? You must be mad to ask me not to think. Since your ring, I've been manicured down to the last drop.

V. T. to A. P., 18*th April.*

Back in Milan.

You are wrong not to write to me about your life, and about *Othello*, and about what presents we are getting. I had a letter from Uncle L. about finance. It isn't hundreds we want, it's thousands. And unless the Deluge comes, I shall get £100 a week when I am singing. All my jewels are in the Monte di Pietà. I haven't a penny, only don't tell Mother.

I wrote this in Rome, but send it off now.

FROM MEMORY.

For sheer amusement, and the feeling that success was very near, there was nothing like this time in Rome. It did seem as if I was going to make a wonderful impression with my voice, both at home and in Italy. Tosti had exquisite taste, and I think he thought—what no one else thought—that my personality and acting would carry me through an insufficiency of voice, even in Italy. I studied with him every day, danced by the seashore to amuse and scandalise the Roman ladies, had delightful student expeditions in Rome with Charles, sitting on the Palatine Hill, and in the Borghese Gardens, and then dressed up like a queen to go out at night to balls or operas with him and Lord Ribblesdale.

V. T. TO A. P., *20th April.*

Well, perhaps, I had better tell you that I am *scritturata* for *Traviata*, but in a theatre so small that no one will see me; but I think it will lead to other big things, and, of course, the part itself is no joke. What will Ricordi say? I can always answer him back with, "Well, you said, 'Can't assure nothink.'"

Alas! the *Titanic!* I cry all day, not only for those people, but thinking it might be you or me. It's quite certain you would have drowned, because

you would never have moved from your bed, and would certainly not have stood the cold water well. Oh, I do beg you to learn to bear cold water, because you are a good swimmer; and whatever dangers one can avoid, let one. In fire you're done, or earthquake—but water, you've got your own self to blame. Bless you.

Caramba will make my frocks for *Traviata*. He is marvellous for detail and colour—even better than Percy Macquoid. Cara's teachers passed me off as a Russian, so my name is to be Viola Vatinska. But they said there was no necessity for me to be called by a Russian name, as my voice was Italian. I have telegraphed to Auntie Con, however, for the name of my Lithuanian ancestor, as then there would be a method in our madness. If I *début* it will be the 16th or 18th of May. Don't say anything yet. I think it ought to be one of my great parts for the first year of my career, if I ever have any, by Gad!

V. T. TO A. P., *22nd April.*

In Rome there were lovely crowns made of gold leaves. I want you to ask Waters, the jeweller, about it. I want to wear one over my veil on my wedding day.

If you aren't interested in me now, when will you be? You won't tell me whether I am to ask for

the Wharf, or whether Claude Lowther is lending Hurstmonceaux. We must be married on a Saturday of some kind, because of your being free; Friday unlucky. I have decided on copying Marie Louise for my wedding gown. Will you get me pictures of her wedding with Napoleon, also Josephine; but I am more like Marie Louise.

Phyllis sounded wonderful in *Othello*. A pity poor Daddy was slow on the first night.[1] What a triumph about the bed being down-stage! You remember how I cried.

V. T. to A. P., *25th April.*

About the plan of Beecham taking the theatre for opera. If Dana is offish, go at once secretly to Beecham and consult him. He might make them do "Pscovitana" (I suppose this means "Khovantchine"—Rimsky-Korsakoff), with a miracle in it called Chaliapin. You may or may not know about him. I think Beecham

[1] My father's production of *Othello* with Phyllis Neilson Terry as Desdemona. When discussing *Othello* with my father on my holiday, I used often to cry with vexation at his following tradition or convention. Desdemona's bed is generally put right up-stage, in order to give the actor room to rant about; but of course Desdemona and the bed should be, as I thought, the centre of gravity. This was one of the few times when my father took my childish suggestions to heart. I was so vehement in these discussions and my tears so constant, that one would have thought that I should have desisted when the next opportunity came, but I could not.

is a good medium, as he would probably be able to get *Rosenkavalier*, and be favourable to me.

I have been looking out rings for you, for I think you must have one, like an Italian *fiancé*. You need not always wear it, of course. Would you like one with a hot green stone called a turmeline—like your character, very dark, almost black! Or would you feel like a Jew in it? You would not need to wear it for long. But I am afraid to get it without your liking it. But it won't be for some time yet, as I shan't be rich.

V. T. to A. P., 28*th April.*

I am going to sing on the 1st of June till the 15th. Your telegram came half an hour too late. I am tired of telling people about it, and not very happy myself, except that it is to "fulfil the sayings of the prophets," also a glorious part. If I can do that, by Gad! I am made.

Billy Grenfell, a miracle for best man. Any date thereabouts.[1]

[1] A. P. wrote at this time that our wedding was to be fixed for 11th July, which would give me three weeks in London to prepare after my *début* at Cormons. He was vexed at what he called "the palpable and extravagant duplicity of my keeping a secret from Arkel my singing *Traviata*; in fact, of my making a *début* at all"; and he wished to know if my lessons with Cara's teacher were also a secret from Mme. A.—which they weren't, because I was constantly dropping hints to salve my conscience. I think he was drugged by my boastfulness into thinking I would be a great singer in the future, which Sir Charles Stamford had already prophesied.

Lambert says I've no more money in my bank, though I have some "invested" (said she proudly).

You dear angel. Think of me as *Traviata*; it will be funny. I shall be good in the last act. Ricordi is a brute not to give me anything to do. He made a great many compliments to my voice, among others, "Now I believe you are in love,"—damn his eyes! He says I shall never be really a *donna maritata* however many children I have, but always Viola Tree—a girl different from the others!

Is your ring tight for me, or loose?—I forget.

P.S.—What a funny letter!—fit to be published in memoirs; keep it.

H. H. A. to V. T., *29th April.*

Lympne Castle, Lympne, Kent.

I know (technically) it's my turn to write. All the same I sent by your mother, who stayed with us for two nights at Ewelme, a message of appeal, a cry out in the dark, which I hoped would before now have awakened a response. But the heavy-footed post creeps in its petty pace from day to day, and I turn over my pile of letters from all sorts and conditions of men, women and lunatics—feverishly, but in vain, for one bearing "fair Milan" postmark. Not that I am ignorant that you have been in Rome, in the company of magnetic personalities—although you never told me that this was to be such an early item on the

programme. I conjecture that you are back once more in your music mill, and have resumed chaperonage over the neglected Iris.

Tell me all about things. I am, *vis-à-vis* of your present fortunes and your immediate future, wholly *désorienté*. I foresee my agitation, and despondency forces me to take refuge in an almost unknown tongue. All my beautiful and carefully elaborated Italian style has been nipped and frozen by the blasts of discouragement, for which I held you (in the past, at least) to blame. When are you coming home? And when are the "abhorrèd shears" (for such I must regard them) due to perform their appointed task? And what about the house? All these and many other questions call for an immediate answer.

I have been taking a short holiday at Ewelme in golden-memoried scenes. To-morrow I return to my mill. H. H. A.

V. T. TO A. P., *2nd May*.

I am afraid it's no good worrying about Beecham—if, as you say, Daddy won't look at letting the theatre. The only object of the whole thing was Daddy's theatre, because it is considered *distinto* above all others. I expect you will have great difficulty in knowing whether you are to say you are pleased about *Traviata*, and being tactful about not being surprised, and not saying "At last the realisation of our hopes."

You will have seen that I myself am not very elated—you can remember this for my "Life"! And of course I am keeping it a secret from Arkel, which is difficult, and which you will blame me for. It can't be helped! She said it wasn't in my *tesitura di voce*, but Ricordi said "All right." Of course, if I could get a *Lohengrin* instead, I should accept it. Patrick is here, very sweet, and not interrupting my work. We dine out and lunch in. I went to order my 1840 frocks to-day. You will love my voice when I come back, I expect. Pat is writing my letter for me as I am so tired.[1] You did all the business well, but Daddy clinched by saying he must stay in the theatre, not let it.

V. T. to A. P., *3rd May*.

I am trembling, because I have two auditions to-day, and one with Henry Russell of Boston.[2] I am in good voice, but so thin all of a sudden—I think it's singing too much, and then, Maria being away makes me busy; I must see to it. Dear, I am not working at *Traviata* seriously yet, till I have got over my

[1] In many of my letters I say that I was tired. I expect this affected my voice more than anything, as normally I am never tired, and even then have to be at the end of my tether before I will admit it.

[2] Henry Russell was Landon Ronald's brother, director of the Boston Opera House, and a great power in the world of music generally. He was one of Melba's greatest friends, and practically ruled Covent Garden at that moment.

auditions; it makes my voice bright and high, instead of dark and lumpy. Thank you for Napoleon's picture. You don't understand: the wedding must be in the first ten days of July; I want safely to escape my thousandth birthday, the 17th.

Later.

Dearest,—I sang at the Del Verme to Russell. They were pleased, but separately said that Wagner was my place, because of my height—which is more of a joke than ever, though I look short on account of my clothes and low heels now. I feel rather discouraged, and bitter against them, and I am so tired; but Cara's teacher says I shall be all right with *Traviata*. Mother seems pleased. You mustn't make her come here, I should be too ashamed. It will probably be squalid. And they might *protestata* me for my height.[1]

Maria is coming back.[2] She says she will be very poor, and must earn her living.

Dr Arkel wants me to get "Sieglinde" at the Dal

[1] The Cormons where I was engaged to sing was, as I knew, a third-rate place; but "it was the thing to do" (at all events in Italy), to have an appearance. "*Protestata*" meant that the crowd would protest against you and shout you down; it often happened in quite respectable theatres.

[2] Maria, the dear little friend who lived with me, lost her father at this time, and went off to Germany, intending not to come back, leaving me alone with Iris, so it is no wonder really that I was worried and fatigued.

Verme for next autumn, though all the singers are already engaged. I see Salzmann Stevens has got a hold like a vice on her public—she is very fine; and I can't see what else there is to do for me, except not to be so small and elegant. I am frightened about being poor, because I am not going to be a *furore* for many years, I can see. Oh, I am so sad.

V. T. to A. P., *4th May.*

I love the idea of the 11th. There will be no terrible hurry. What about your clothes?—your old good ones for the actual wedding, with perhaps a new pair of trousers, and an entirely new suit for travelling? I am terribly worried about my travelling—or going-away—dress, as it is called. I don't know whether to have a girlish light dress, or a rather improper coat and skirt. I think it must be white, or red, or both. Yellow is another colour I fancy. It's a difficult problem. Anyhow, the hat is to gratify your florid claims—large and black, with feathers.

I ordered my *Traviata* clothes to-day. Rather fluffy and gay, like she was, but still lovely. I haven't any money to get the clothes with, but that's a mere speck on the horizon, no doubt. I am rather worried, but not very, as yet. Maria coming back will take a great weight off my mind, because then I shan't have to think of two things at once, as I do now.

You are ungrateful about the ring, though I like your nice virile tastes. You shan't have a green ring, at any rate. You shan't have any as likely as not.

From Memory, and A. P.'s Letters.

Our engagement was announced in the *Times* and *Morning Post* just at this time, and A. P. wrote to me very unselfishly to say "chuck nothing"; that in a year's time I should be in a position to dictate to the impresarios; and what did it matter what people thought of my going away so soon after my marriage, in September? He was also full of unpacking brass umbrella stands, and cups and saucers. He said that Mrs Patrick Campbell had sent us three pairs of sheets of fine soft silk, with great big orange ribbon let in, and our initials, V. A., in the middle. Gerald du Maurier[1] has given pillow-cases of the same material. "I don't know what you will say when you see them, they are too wonderful," he wrote.

A. P. had done a translation in blank verse of a play called *Rhodora*, by a friend of mine in Milan, a very fine writer, only twenty years old. Mrs Patrick

[1] Gerald du Maurier went into management at Wyndham's about this time. He had played a great deal with Mrs Campbell and my father. He says that he owes much to both. The Du Mauriers and Trees have been lifelong friends—I have known Sir Gerald since I was ten. After my father died, after the first shock was passed, he in some ways and in some measure took his place in my life; he was someone to look to.

Campbell had written to A. P., to tell him that if a manager could be found, she could make a success of it. It was an amazing achievement on Alan's part, as, though he had learnt Italian from Latin, he did not speak it fluently.

V. T. TO A. P., *8th May*.

To write to you on all your three lovely letters will be difficult.[1] Barrie says, "There comes a time when God (or something) stands back and watches the man." I think this is probably your moment; I have nothing to do but just stand still, very thankfully and gratefully.

I talked with Diana, Marjorie, and the Duchess about where to have our honeymoon; but I am afraid of not sufficient luxury. Iris suggests Cornwall, and the Duchess suggests the Bristol Hotel, Folkestone! another plan is Glottenham. Diana is angry at no bridesmaids, so I've thought it over again. But if it isn't St Paul's, it doesn't matter what happens.

The Duchess envies everything in this house; I gave them all lunch to-day, eminently successful—spaghetti, good Barola wine, Vitello *à la Milanese*, finished off by bel paise cheese, coffee, and Chartreuse liqueur. The Duchess is still for Vincent Square. Do make one more run for it—a low, low offer. Speranza alone could manage it with a charwoman. It would save us endless money.

[1] I sometimes wrote A. P. three or four letters a day.

V. T. to A. P., 10*th May*.

Yesterday I saw some amber beads, real ones, varying a good deal in size, at the shop where I bought your cigarette-holder. Would you like them for bridesmaids' presents? Will you find out if Daddy is really poor, because of my trousseau? It's rather awful, but we ought to try and let this house till the end of September; what do you think? I have Camilieri to help me out with my *Traviata*, and Cara's teacher does wonders with my voice. Arkel is pleased with the voice, but says I have lost the support a little, which I have, of course, because one can't be heavy on *Traviata*. The heat is rather exciting, and I am writing in my night-gown only. Do you think Mother would like to chuck all, and come out here after acting in the Shakespeare Festival?

Dear darling, tell me about the patterns I sent you for myself for golf and country wear. The moss and bright blue has a wonderful effect on my hair, but I like the sympathetic green, the colour of the bents and dunes. Say what you think at once. I read Pepys' *Diary* at every spare moment; but you mustn't crow over me—I don't like it for the reasons you like it. I like it for all the things about going by boat to places, and the ducks, and King Charles the Second, and so on. (I wrote to Mrs Asquith to ask for Puffin as a page.) I like the idea of All Saints', but not All Souls', as a

church. It's just big enough for Granny and Mr Dana, and that's all.

From Memory.

The next letter to A. P. enclosed a letter from Lord Plymouth, who asked for both my Sargent drawings for the Exhibition at Cardiff. Mr Sargent said that his drawing of me was one of his favourites, and he had it photographed for his own private collection; but I think my father's is the finest of all his charcoal heads.

The next letter is all about churches. I had set my heart, ridiculously, ambitiously, and characteristically, on St Paul's, because of its size, its beauty, and the fact that A. P. and I had been to it a great deal together, both to wander about and to go to the services. I suggested St Bartholomew's in the City—"too beautiful for words." I also seem to have been planning an orchestral concert at the Queen's Hall for untold gold. There was a charlatan conductor in Milan, though a very charming one, who wished to push himself with me as the excuse, not unnaturally perhaps.

Note on Church.

I heard from A. P. that Diana had suggested to my mother St Martin's-in-the-Fields. He wrote, "enormous and beautiful and historic. It is a church with endless tradition."

M. A. TO V. T., *20th May*.

10 DOWNING STREET.

My heart warms to you. Violet will love Elizabeth being your bridesmaid if E.'s height suits you. I should love her to be with you, and Puffin will walk behind you in any little dress you like, whatever the pages of the day wore with the period of the dress. My heart beats with happiness for you—your fidelity and courage. God keep thee.

Come over soon, and of course you shall go to The Barn, which, alas! won't be furnished till the end of June; but we'll arrange what you wish. Come soon, or nothing will be right. I *wish* it could be at St Paul's Cathedral, I must say! I hope you'll have lots of men to show us into our pews, and put names on places for your nearest and dearest. All this must be done *for* you. Don't have a bouquet, and don't have any colour on you. White is so much more beautiful.

MARGOT.

M. A. TO V. T.

10 DOWNING STREET.

Thanks for darling letter. I love your praise, it is life-giving; and I think your Alan a great dear. I should say really truthfully if ever I caught you and Alan tainted by the line of "least resistance" I should become, I fear, a poor friend. I want to grow all I can

in the bit that's left for me. I pray compassion may always outrun contempt; but just as I haven't time to read rubbish, I haven't got the health or inclination to look up the soulless young females whose degree is taken in Society, who do nothing that lasts, who want to get on, not by character but by conspicuousness.

MARGOT.

V. T. TO A. P., *16th May.*

I am resting in my little bed. Such a room of rest inside, and outside cries of "*Artichoki*," and a rattle of little barrows, and through the open doors the drawing-room, with lilac-and-pink curtains.

Cara's teacher says Iris's voice would be bigger than mine, but then she'll never have the patience to train; so there isn't much in that. She is making mine marvellously clear, but it's still sort of tied up a little. I always feel it's a bad fit into my big body and throat.

Marjorie and Diana[1] have just left for Venice. Cara's teacher says that Marjorie has a glorious voice, much more register than mine.

Note.—I was busy now in my preparations for Cormons. I arranged for Iris to go and stay with Cara's teacher, an extraordinarily hospitable and generous woman, as, for some reason or other, I could not take her with me—expense, I expect; and then Maria was to meet me there from Berlin.

[1] The Lady Marjorie Manners, now Marchioness of Anglesey.

V. T. to A. P., 18*th May*.

We are packing up. Nine hundred francs I have now, which is splendid; but we have tickets and debts to pay with that. I have bought five lovely amber necklaces with your £5. Speranza is an angel. I am thanking Mrs Patrick Campbell and Venetia (Stanley) [1] for their letters, otherwise no one till I come.

V. T. to A. P., 19*th May*.

I am waiting for the impresario now. It is 11.30 and he hasn't come, which bothers me a good deal. The next ring at the bell will be him, though; and if there is no ring I shall have to go into the Galleria, like the poor tenors do, and look for him. But up to now he has seemed keen about me.

I am too thrilled about the sheets; they sound marvellous. Maria is giving us feather beds, so there will be no question of making the bed. The feathers are from the choicest geese in Germany, and are being sent to London direct. I hope the green metal wreath is going on for me well, also the cameo earrings.

I sing for Panizza,[2] yes, but that would only be for

[1] Lady Sheffield's daughter, who afterwards married Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, our great friend; A. P. was private secretary to him for some years, first at the Treasury, then at the Indian Office.

[2] Panizza was a great conductor at the Dal Verme, and I had a chance of singing Sieglinde there, also an offer from Genoa, of which more later.

a performance or so of Sieglinde, as the others are *scritturata* already for it, whereas Genoa would be for a whole season.

Maria says my actual volume of voice sounds good, not great. But I think *a forza di cantare* it will come out much more, especially on Cara's teacher's way of shouting out with open mouth, quite straight.

Bruno despises me as a *singer*, though Tosti [1] shook him a bit, I think. Tosti is passing through on his way to London—and Bruno and Cara. She's being married on their way to Florence, where he is to sing.

I begin to feel that the porter has told the impresario that I am out. Oh, why doesn't that man come? I am terrified that he has thought better of it.

V. T. TO A. P., *19th May*.

Don't worry me now or expect any letters for the next few weeks, except scraps. I hate the sight of men! Ludovici in the hot weather, with absolutely unwashed hands and face, is awful. Get hold of a motor for us.

Later.

I go off. Send letters here till I know of my hotel. I don't know my words and have no money, otherwise

[1] Tosti had come to Milan again, and heard me sing. He was now delighted with my voice, but could not understand, neither could B., that I should put it before my marriage, or indeed sing at all after marriage. They thought, in their Southern way, not so much that domesticity would claim me, but that A. P. would not allow my going abroad.

all right. I look enormously tall and colossally fat in my dresses, which are floaters. I at last see the ridiculousness of my height. Tell Mother all this. I love you. You can do nothing for me. I shall sing Tuesday or Wednesday night—perhaps even Monday![1] Blast it! Bless you. I come back here for a little to settle things up. I had sweet letters from your mother and Betty.

For the first time I realise the ugliness of fat. Viola Vatinska my real name, or, if you want to be accurate —Valissa.

What made Mother decide to come? I thought she was in the Shakespeare Festival. Mrs Campbell writes that you are to translate a bit of the play—could you do the entrance of *Rhodora*,[2] and the arriving scene? I think those are the most typical. I hope you yourself like it. It's sweet of Mrs Campbell to bother.

FROM MEMORY.

I found an envelope in Maria's handwriting amongst my letters, full of agents' visiting-cards of an enormous

[1] I started for Cormons alone, meeting Maria there. The plot of my going was a complete secret from Mme. Arkel. I said I was going for a few days' holiday. I knew my part musically very well, having done it with three teachers and two accompanists. I even went so far as to study the movements with a poor old basso profundo singer, who knew no more of acting than the fairest of supers at my father's theatre; but he knew the ropes of the opera—where one crossed and where one fainted.

[2] The Italian play of which I have already spoken.

size, printed on rice-paper; also from tenors, wishing me good fortune. I realise now that they only circulated around me because they thought I was rich and a *signora*. I heard after that some thought I was a Princess. It seems funny that they should have tumbled to the fact that I was a "lady" of sorts, flattering in a way, but of course it made them not take me seriously. My singing to them was just a "stunt," like keeping tame peacocks. Whenever they told my fortune, which they frequently did, they would wave their hands in the air and say, "*Danaro, sempre danaro*" (money, always money).

V. T. to A. P., 21*st May*.

Udine (on the Frontier).

I am sitting in a goodish place, high above the town, a wonderful plain underneath, like the Lombardy Plain; and there is going to be an awful storm, so it is dangerous here. But there are such wonderful nightingales, just two occasionally, with that gentle "Melba" note repeated two or three times first. I am going to be a tremendous success, that is clear; but in such a small place, and with only a few Austrian officers to make one excited about looks or clothes. I am getting to love this career, because they say "*brava*" every two minutes. It's my *cuore* and pianissimo they like, because I must tell you that

my teacher, who is a sort of witch, so as to lighten my voice for *Traviata*, had to make it more sparkling and loose, rather to the detriment of my middle notes. But they will come back.[1]

My God! Patrick sent me a marvellous bit of *Lucretius*, I think, translated; because, as is sometimes the case, I began to quote unknowingly from the Great Masters on the subject. But do not be angry that I wrote to him about this—Mad, the nightingales! quite near to me!

Later.

There are pretty bad Americans here who do not know who I am, and give me advice about how to behave if I go to London. The mother said that her eldest daughter had married into an English family who "stint their stomachs to put it on their backs"! Most strange, is it not?

Oh, by the way, with your permission I have decided that we must come back to Italy after two days' quiet

[1] They never came back, but I do not think it was so much the fault of method as that, on this particular day on which I wrote, the storm of which I spoke broke with great violence, and I walked home in a cotton dress and no hat, so that I got a cold, such as only an English nose and throat can get—an ordinary nursery cold, through which I had to sing when the cold was in its prime, which was cruel and tearing to the vocal chords. The great London specialists told me that there are three ways of ruining a voice—singing with the wrong method, singing rôles too high for one, and singing on a cold.

at Glottenham, then out here quick, cheap—Cook's circular to Venice—second-class return. A week or ten days in Milan, and four at Venice. I couldn't bear to wait till next year for you to take me there, so heavenly in July, quite empty and full of cholera.

CORMONS, HOTEL LEONE, BIANCO.

O darling, it's too awful your not coming to Italy. It really ought to have weighed with you a little in your choice of appointments, to think that I had determined to spend three months of the year in Italy, always and for ever with you. Now we are completely cut off, unless I basely leave you; but all interest and pleasure in the house has gone for me now.

Well, I am here. It's pretty but too small; but, as usual in Italy, they manage to turn out pretty good singers, though they are carpenters and blacksmiths.

See how difficult it is to write when I am tired. I will wait till morning.

I shall probably get an *Otello* after this, Fano says, so I must chuck the Queen's Hall concert, then I shall be freer to go.

V. T. TO A. P., 21*st May*.

Rhodora has got to be translated. I think it is wonderful for you to be friends with Mrs Campbell, and for her to act in it. The "soldi" will roll in.

That's that; no delay, please. There is more acting in it than in any great play, except *Œdipus*, and as much as in any of Stephen Phillips' entirely successful plays. There are a few people, but in a cheap spectacle, a few people are better. Ricketts is the man for all primitive, Biblical, or —— things.

This carries us on to St Martin's-in-the-Fields. Very splendid idea, and I think best up to now, except Westminster Abbey. Find out first from Mr Langton how much money I have invested still. I could spend some of it on the Service. We need have no flowers, much, and only Mr Frank Bridge to play, and red choristers, as likely as not. If not, clinch St Martin's-in-the-Fields at once. I like the idea of the populace of Trafalgar Square, and passing His Majesty's Theatre on the way. I wish you would talk to Margot about the wedding music. She is so utterly loving and with us, and will be the greatest friend we have. She knows of a lovely hymn.

Letter from V. T. at Cormons to Iris Tree in Milan.

Dearest Iris,—I think you are pretty selfish to go on your own pleasures, and not to remember to go home sometimes and see that Speranza is all right. She has absolutely no money, and I left three cheques for you in the yellow box. Also Speranza ought to go with

you to Borgo Nuovo, to tidy up your things, as Mme. B. has only one servant. At least she can do that. Twice a day she ought to come—to dress you in the morning, and to put your things away in the evening. You must know that I am too busy and too far away. If you had gone yourself, you would have found the paints at once. Speranza does not know "grease paint"—how should she? They are in a box with my sandals and the gold powder for my hair, all together; Maria says—in the green or yellow box upstairs. So don't muddle it up. I can get along without them, perhaps, till you come. Apparently there will be only three representations. The whole thing is not much worth while, I fear, except as a rehearsal for the future, and you must just decide whether it is worth while to come. You mustn't travel with Speranza; it's too expensive, and there's no necessity. You have not to change, and can travel by that 11 o'clock train with a friendly lady. I should think Tuesday would be the last representation.[1]

Note from A. P.'s Letters.

I had a letter from A. P., to say that I had written him six letters in four days, and that he had just made the fatal request for leave for our wedding on 11th July. A great deal about my father's plans, which

[1] This was, I am afraid, a rather characteristic bullying letter to my poor little sister, then aged about fifteen.

apparently revolve round Phyllis Neilson Terry, who was the most expensive engagement he had ever made. It showed how much he believed in her great art. A. P. said: "The marvellous thing is that you are never entirely at fault, even when you must go sideways, like a crab. Did you lose the photographs? No, darling, but you sent them one by one, in case they should get lost. Oh, you sevenfold genius! and I thought you had just vulgarly lost them, whereas you had invented for yourself a strange, new, hidden way of ensuring safe delivery."

V. T. to A. P., *about 22nd May.*

I sing to-night. Last night was a dress-rehearsal. I sang wonderfully, but *que voulez vous* in this little place? It made me realise, though, how difficult it is to sing, how great a physical effort, and how enormously one lacks power of expressing oneself. The minute I hear my own high note, I want to burst on it and break my throat and body on it, and almost succeed; then I find myself in the next phrase (which is a quick one) singing like a runner that has just breasted the tape, if he had to go on running.[1]

They think me wonderful; but then, of course, they are such utterly poor, little ignorant peasants, who have never been to a big town. I think Ricordi will

[1] This is a true and exact description of the sensation of singing, not in the least akin to acting, or to anything else in the world; for those who do not sing, it may be a new light.

be a rotten coward if he " can't assure nothink " now. I just did feel that lack of repose, which is apparent in great singers, but nothing else wanting.

My throat is a little scraped this morning. I am going into Gaurizio to be photographed, and am in the train.

The impresario (don't tell this) is so poor that he thinks he will only give three representations. As it is, I am playing the first and second violins myself; don't tell anyone. Maria is playing the piano in the orchestra —I think, for the dress-rehearsal only, as I insisted on more instrumentalists.

They all think there is no doubt about my future, and of course they knew at once it wasn't my first appearance. The poor little tenor is so nervous.

About what you said: No, I will give no kind of concert, I will just be married. Be sweet to Mother. I will write to her when the train is not quite so much in motion.

Later.

I am sitting in a garden now, rather nice and sleepy, drinking purple wine of the country with strawberries of the country. It's not bad, but impoverished by mixed races and mixed industries.

From Memory.

I have said that I sang with a heavy cold. The day I went to Gaurizio I tried to cure my cold by having a

Turkish bath, as I had heard my father say that for an important occasion, though a drastic and risky plan, it did occasionally take away a cold.

But a Turkish bath in an Italian provincial town—a "Bagno Turco"—is not all one would hope. In fact, it was only just an ordinary rather dirty warm bath. After it I went to have my hair curled into ringlets, as no curls or grease paint had been sent by Iris (they did arrive, I think, for the second night).

It would not seem real if one tried to describe the town, the inhabitants, or the performance. It was so unlike anything one has ever dreamt of. The soldiers were Austrian and the shop-people were Italian. I believe in the Great War Cormons was a very important military centre. It was a plateau looking over the plains.

The young men in the place were puny and decadent, and had nothing whatever to do but to sit outside cafés, and try to flirt with the singers, who happened to be the American girl and myself. Not quite the kind they were accustomed to, probably.

Garguilo, who fulfilled the double function of impresario and conductor, was a man with plenty of heart; only I think he realised that money could be got from me, and therefore raised difficulties about the tenor. There were three tenors—one a fierce, tall butcher with moustachios, who could not sing at all, and was indeed *protestato* in *Trovatore*, in

which the American girl made her *début*; one a poor little thing, half my height, but a gentleman, with a sweet voice, and who possessed evening-dress for the third act, which everyone thought very wonderful; then there was the stock company tenor, who hated the singers who had paid, and hated me incidentally, and wanted to sing himself instead of the newcomers who paid.

The agony in the dressing-room before the performance was just as great as when dressing for a wonderful first night at His Majesty's with my father. I had many flowers and many calls, and it was a good get-through, considering *sempre libero* was not really at all in my voice. But, luckily, *La Traviata* doesn't have much more coloratura to sing, and the next two acts were all acting and emotion, which, considering the public of Cormons had only had old, poor derelict Italians or American novices in the past, I suppose astonished them. They were kind and appreciative, and I had several encores. I sent a telegram to Mother to say, "Great little triumph: don't publish anything."

The company and I returned to the hotel—I had really had a great ovation for a foreigner; they said that my acting was like La Belincioni—very high praise, as she was the greatest actress-singer, and they knew what they were talking about.

When I came back to the hotel we had speeches

in rhyme, a lost art on the Italian impresario and the other protagonists. Supper was, needless to say, given by me, as they, poor darlings, did not have a square meal—but Italian food is always square. After I got up to my room they and some of the population shouted, and made me come and bow to them on the balcony. They asked me to sing an aria, which I—by that time quite the prima donna—blushingly refused to do. All next day I stayed in bed nursing my voice, but at night I hardly got through the big aria, I had such a bad throat; and the third day I was unable to sing from almost complete extinction of voice.

And that was not all: the little tenor had to go away, the one with moustachios (who tried to bribe me to let him sing with baskets of cherries, which grew rampant on every tree), and the stock company was offended and jealous. So I waited a day or two for new developments, but I found they would only put up a performance if I paid the whole of it, orchestra, singers, and all.

So I left with Maria for Milan, and never sang that best of rôles again.

PART IX

BACK TO MILAN—MARRIAGE—AND RETURN TO ITALY

PART IX.

BACK TO MILAN—MARRIAGE—AND RETURN TO ITALY.

FROM V. T. TO A. P., *14th June.*

I LOVED your letter, though you don't answer what I asked you. I don't believe you can have got the letter. I expected a telegram to-day. You worry me by what you say about the bills. I didn't know I had any, except Luise Piers for hats—which is a good deal. I think it would be quite unfair to use any of your thousand for that. I must take one of my own hundreds. We have no money left here except for the next few days. You see the mistake is Daddy sending in bursts, not regularly. I shall have quite a lot of debts if he, or rather the treasury, does not forward the money. About my trousseau and dresses: I have decided to send all of them to London, all five—three coats and skirts and two dresses—to be paid for at the theatre. Then I still owe Cara's teacher 300 francs, Mme. Arkel 150, and Dr Arkel another 200; and we shall want—how much for our four second-class tickets (Iris, Maria, Speranza and myself) to London? It is awful, but Bruno and Cara spent far, far more. That's my only comfort—nine francs for

those two each meal, instead of four francs. I suppose 800 francs would do us. Then there are your beads, 150 francs. I am wretched, wretched at the amount one spends—and I agree with you; perfect Walter's flat for as long as he can let us have it.[1]

It will save us enormously in the way of trouble about light and coals and wall-papers.

I think that my proposal that we should migrate there, say on the first of August, when we are sure all London has left for the seaside, wouldn't be bad. All our fun can be Saturday to Monday at Glottenham, or wherever we are lent an empty house; or even Glottenham inhabited would not be bad—so long as there were no Patricks or Tommys; that is to say, if my idea about you taking holiday in September holds good; but if you would prefer to whisk away here almost directly, you have only to say so; a lot depends on to-morrow, and this business of selling my *scrittura* contract. I wish I could hear from you, though. I feel very poor and weak—"not born in any high estate." I have remembered that there is still Iris's professor of drawing to pay—a little over 700 francs. I will write to Lambert by this post.

The nice thing about Bruno is that he has no malice, and is a child in many ways.

[1] Charming house in Great Queen Street, now pulled down, belonging to Johnson's Boswell. Walter Creighton lent it to us; at least we paid him a small stipend. It was full of his lovely furniture and china.

V. T. TO A. P., *21st June.*

MILAN.

To-day is the longest day, don't forget, and so gloriously hot.

Don't scold me. I long to come back, and no sooner have I settled not to do the Genoa thing than it was violently on again—three operas, and certain *Salome*.

I went to Ricordi again to-day, and said: "Supposing the people who want me for the Genoa season want me for *Conchita*, which would you say?" He said: "I should say No." He said height, inexperience, difficulty of the music, risk, so on. Then I cried, cried terribly. You see I don't give in or cry easily. When I do, it's terrible.

Then he became an utterly different person, and so gentle and sweet. He said he didn't understand that it meant so much to me. And after he gave me a wonderful letter to Sonsogno, this evening, the publisher of *Salome*, etc., who is giving this season in Genoa, so that Sonsogno was wreathed in smiles, and that there would be no difficulty at all. I could do three operas, but must wait a bit. You see, once Ricordi has heard me *inscena* on the stage, I shall never be afraid again. He says I can leave all in his hands, but I must wait just two more days to see all the cheats about the money.

I won't write more now, but don't be bitter with me. God knows, I hate waiting.

Thank you most frightfully for the money, and Daddy for his cheque.

I adore and worship you, and should be content to be in a coffin with you.

FROM V. T. TO A. P., *24th June.*

O darling, how difficult is this life, as you will soon see. I think you are right not to ever fuss me, but you think I will get there in the end.

Lovely to think that this will only just catch you before I get back to you. I firmly intend to start on Thursday, as the audition is on Wednesday. I do not think they can cheat much when I am gone. Ricordi is after them.

I wonder if the Reinhardts are in London.

We might send them an invitation to the wedding.

I have learnt four pages of *Salome* (my word!) to sing to these people.

As to *Rhodora*, won't George Alexander do it? Granville Barker best, and my father all right, if he would play *Novalis*. Show it to him, but say it is a terribly bare, rough translation, otherwise he might say: "Do you think Alan clever, dear?"

Good-bye. It's hot, I suppose, enough to frighten other people. I am pale, but well and happy.

Later.

I am horrified to see Mr Asquith may go on an expedition to Ulster on 11th July. It would kill our wedding if he weren't there.

I have made lots of new friends, almost entirely Bohemian. As in *La Bohème*, they come in for cakes and orangeade, sparsely coloured with red wine.

Later.

For pity's sake, remember I was open with you when I took this appointment, hoping that you would be with me.

I may be too sanguine, but this is my beginning year, so exceptional because of the Verdi Centenary, and Beecham's power at Covent Garden. The Scala begins in October here and goes on till May.

Things are dreadfully against you out here, as it were.

Now we have come to the cross-roads we have always heard about—artists marrying.

Good God, what shall we do ?

From Memory.

I received a letter from A. P., enclosing a telegram for me, which said: "Kindly send cheque £10. Think Genoa off." This meant I should return immediately, disappointed of my contract; but he

interpreted it otherwise. He wrote to me rather firmly, intimating that our banns were to be read this next Sunday, and did I intend to return to hear them ? and ended: "Tell me the minute you arrive, and arrive as beautiful as you did last time, not as you did the time before that." To which I replied about the 26th: "It is no good writing me letters like that, after the style of Arthur Bourchier, to say 'Get out and shut up.' I am sorry I have been tiresome on that subject, but it was mostly for your sake, and so near my heart, fit to break it. You see things have turned out—as usual with me. The men did not look at me or try to hear me even. So no one knew me, and the audition went for nothing. I am afraid I can't start before Sunday now. Mme. Arkel thinks it is madness to go just now when all the arrangements are being made. Never mind; I'm getting so well used to all this, and might do wonders with Panizza."

On the 21st I sent a telegram to A. P. in Italian, to say I would stay two or three days for "*affare avantagiosa*," and that I should be back on Sunday for the second reading of banns. This was exactly what happened. My contract was concluded with Garguilo and Sonsogno for *Salome* and Helena in *Mephistopheles* for the autumn. It was, I think, my dancing that got me through their prejudices. They came to see me dance in an amazing get-up of veils, and of course that kind of feat of semi-athletic

dancing, which I evolved for myself as a child, I must say without conceit, was good. There were no Isidor Duncans or Margaret Morrises to copy. It was original. To the Italians it was unique. As I am setting everything down with absolute truth, I must confess that I had to pay large sums to the agents, and to the impresario for my appearance in Genoa. I believe it is quite a common practice for a beginner in Italy, but it was utterly contrary to Ricordi's advice, and I am afraid I lied to him. In this I made a very big mistake. The people who advised me rightly all through were Bernard Shaw and Ricordi, but I did not know my luck.

FROM H. H. A. TO V. T., *29th June.*

10 DOWNING STREET.

Dearest Viola,—A word of welcome. I got your letter. Of course, nothing would keep me away from St Martin's on 11th July, nor could poppy or mandragora—in any dose, however copious—make me forget that fateful date. I am off for Sunday to Buckhurst, but must see you very soon.

V. T. TO A. P., *10th June.*

PIETRO VERRI 3, MILAN.

I did not stay for any more than these three performances, because Maria advised me to hurry here and make better auditions for better theatres. I was

so sorry after, because I loved the part so—and who knows when I shall sing it next. Is it true Ricordi's father is dead ? If so, I fear it is from too much love of living, but at eighty-five it doesn't seem as if it mattered much.

In the event of a great *scrittura* I would wait until the 1st July to come home, but otherwise I hope to come on the 20th June. They might engage me for Desdemona at the Dal Verme in October. Very few *débutantes* here have three *bis's* I bet.

V. T. TO A. P., *10th June.*

MILAN.

I am so tired to-night—few would realise how tired—and I am depressed too, fairly. It may be Cara and Bruno, with their tired arrogance about being the only lovers and the only singers in the world. I gave them dinner last night.

I love you to be busy with that play, and Daddy's plays, and I love you to dance the minuet with Mrs Campbell—I suppose you are having more dealings with Nicholls, the wardrobe master.[1]

Tosti came to-day for Giulio Ricordi's funeral. He says I am a bad woman of affairs, and that *bisogna muovervi*—"I must get a move on." He gave me a

[1] A great character at His Majesty's. He controlled the huge wardrobe for every production, and used to hand out to very favoured people costumes on occasions of balls and *tableaux vivants*.

splendid letter to Panizza, about the Dal Verme in the autumn.

Tosti and Cara's teacher say I made a grossly stupid step in leaving Cormons at the height of my glory. They say I ought to have stayed and sung more performances at any cost, then my fame would have spread to Trieste, and I should have gone on there. It was Maria's advice and the jealousy of the tenor that made me leave. However, it can't be helped. One can only learn by experience in this life.[1]

From Memory.

I felt in my heart that it was wrong and against the golden rule I made myself for myself—always to do a thing or go to a place, however disadvantageous it seemed; but never *not* to do or *not* to go, however advantageous it seemed. You see it proved wrong in the case of *Orpheus in the Underground*, which did me more harm than good; but then again, had I gone at first, it might have proved right.

My father's rule is the same idea—always accept everything in the way of professional engagements.

Another rule for me is not to change my mind.

V. T. to A. P., 10*th June*.

Is St Martin's that big church up steps, facing the National Portrait Gallery? Then, without a doubt,

[1] I never have.

take it. By all means let Diana do the dresses —not Greek, but Spruce and Empire, and not in the least fancy dress—white, heavily embroidered with yellow.

I had a thousand pounds once, only I'm afraid I have pulled out some in the last two years.

Just got your letter. I think it only right to tell you that the better to get into small shoes for *Traviata*, I snipped off the ends of my toes. They do not look deformed, except when bare![1]

V. T. to A. P., *18th June.*

Milan.

Things are really moving, and there is a "tide in the affairs of men which," etc. I must ask your permission, because in a short time you will be master of my destiny, and are now post-master as it were.

That impresario I thought so displeased is booking a good contract for me. He won't say yet whether it is Genoa or Naples, but you understand that Naples is second only to the Scala for October. It would be *Thaïs* and *Conchita*; of course the music of *Thaïs* is too rotten, but good to have for London. Also

[1] This was only a joke to tease him, as I was supposed to have good feet. My shoes, by the way, for *Traviata* were exquisite, sent by the costumier with the clothes, with two lovely pairs of stockings for each. Some were mauve satin boots, others black velvet, absolutely of the period.

another good offer from Camilieri, to sing travelling all over England.

But you know how I hold with singing here.

Then there is Panizza's letter from Tosti.

One of the three is bound to come off.

Will you then say, as husband and lover, that you renounce me for the first three months of marriage; or will you, on the contrary, say all this can take place in a year? I absolutely bow to your will, only it must be a decisive will. I must know now. Also remember what Bernard Shaw said about my virgin's voice. I seem to be begging you to let me sing now, and really my heart is so divided, not only my heart, but my body.

My God! the twelve months' separation in October and September! but I swear I will come to London first in July to get our house in order.[1]

Don't throw this aside in uncertainty. I must know.

V. T. TO A. P., *16th June.*

I had a sweet letter from Mother, rather sad about her part with Daddy. How can we make her life lovely for her? When I am away you must be constantly, constantly with her.

[1] I think I was in my heart of hearts suggesting to A. P. that we should postpone our marriage till after I had made good. Not, I think and hope, in fairness to myself, for ambition's sake, but because I wanted to make money and live up to A. P.'s hopes of me—also my father's, who had been so patient.

I am going to make auditions for *Salome* and the other operas I told you about, so that when I get your answer, it can all be settled before I go away.

I wrote you a half sheet at Mme. Arkel's, and now I am lying down and trying to get my voice right with a poultice, to make it really miraculous for Saturday's audition—it isn't right yet after my cold.

A man has asked me to sit for a portrait of a dancer. You won't mind that, will you? He is Bonzani, a brilliant artist.[1]

It's all rubbish about being obliged to have the Mendelssohn March; but do the music for the wedding just as you think, because it's your show, not mine. Don't have any pew-openers except Walter Creighton, Eddie Marsh, and Henry Ainley. I hate that dismal row of bereaved suitors.

FROM MEMORY.

I was married on the 11th July with great pomp, as they say in the fairy tales. My dearest remembrances were Billy Grenfell, coming to see me early in the morning, and bringing me a blue kimono that he had bought in the High Street in Oxford. A. P. gave me a white Prayer-Book, which I carried instead of flowers.

[1] The first of the Futurist school, I believe.

Here are three letters received on my wedding-day.

FROM H. H. A. TO V. T., ON THE OCCASION OF HER WEDDING.

"One port, methought, alike they sought,
One purpose share, where'er they fare:
O bounding breeze, O rushing seas,
At last, at last, unite them there."

FROM BILLY GRENFELL TO V. T.

My darling,—I am sending you herewith a Japanese robe. It is not pretty, but then what can one expect of the Japanese, a people but lately emerged from barbarity?

I know you have a million things to do, but if you have a moment, and want a best-man for this ceremony, send a telegram to 30 Bruton Street, telling me where to meet Alan. I cannot find the boy anywhere.

Best love; *ave atque vale.*

Friday.

HURSTMONCEAUX CASTLE, SUSSEX.

Viola,—I saw you yesterday from the very back of the church, where I was sitting, or rather being sat upon by two extremely fat people—one of them, I think, a cook; but alas, not dear Mrs Browning!

You did not see me, for your eyes were blinded with gladness. I hate weddings—why vulgarise love, which

of all things should be most sacred—by a crowded public function ?

And now I have a confession to make to you. Some months ago I discovered an exquisite ring—two little enamel hands clasping a ruby and a diamond heart. I showed it to Herbert and to Felicity, but it met with scant admiration. Indeed, it was even mocked, for when the two little hands were parted, each dragging with it a heart, they disclosed the words, "*Unisons nous pour la vie.*"

This only meant that centuries back these tiny hands held the secret of two lives. I left Robertsbridge, rather shocked at the ring's reception; but I felt you would love it, so I wrote to you all about it in a letter full of beautiful words and rarer thoughts. But before I had sealed my letter someone came—someone with the tiniest hands God ever fashioned.

I put the ring on her finger, just to see how it would look. It seemed glad to be there, and she bore the burden just as if it had been the hearts of two butterflies.

But they were no butterflies' hearts—they were not hearts bright with laughter, but hearts helpless with wounds and heavy with tears.

All this happened weeks ago, and since then I have hunted the world for something as rare—but hunted in vain !

I thought of giving you one of my own treasures—

a little laughing girl whom Greuze painted—a wicked, mad thought—for has she not been loved for over a hundred years by Fragonard's little boy, who once fell off the wall because I looked at her too long.

I have a statue for which centuries ago two Popes fought—but she is much broken; and only those can see her beauty who lived six centuries ago, when she was at the zenith of her power and splendour.

Then there is Hurstmonceaux, peerless among the monuments of the world—a huge song in stone—but I was informed that under this Radical Government one may not post houses above a certain size.

So I must go on hunting, Viola dear, until I find something worthy of you. Meanwhile I send you my friendship, my *deep*, deep friendship.[1] CLAUDE.

FROM MEMORY.

We went over to see Claude at Hurstmonceaux the Sunday after we were married. He *said* he was not there, and we wandered in the garden, the grass paths of which he had strewn with roses for us.

Later we went to Glottenham, Robertsbridge, Sussex, for a few quiet days—a farmhouse on a clay hill of hop gardens belonging to my parents. Then my father and mother arrived, and A. P. and I went

[1] The thing he found for me was, I am sure, much more beautiful even than the ring. It was an enormous Spanish crucifix, jewelled on its wrong side with large yellow topazes.

off to Windsor, where I sang for Sir Walter Parratt in the Chapel—"Ave Maria" by Verdi—in the organ loft. The audience was Eton boys and the people who had remained after the service. I love religious singing, and sang quite well that day. Then we left for a little "Three Bears'" sort of cottage in a wood—lent to us by Lady Jekyll, near her house, Mumstead. I slept all day long after seeing A. P. off, only awakening to greet him, which should really have gone far to mending my voice; but we had to go all too soon, I to study.

I worked hard at my clothes and part from *Salome*, hardly ever singing out for fear of tiring my voice, but I started very tired for Milan. My only musical adventure was singing to Panizza, about which I had a charming letter from Lady Tosti.

BACK TO ITALY, *September*.

I went back about the 1st of September to Milan armed with beautiful home-made clothes for *Salome*, consisting chiefly of a pleated silver skirt, edged with bugles. We had talked it over with Robbie Ross, who of course knew exactly what Oscar Wilde meant by *Salome*, how I should look. He said that Wilde's *Salome* was not particularly Oriental, but meant to be symbolic of all women; and we thought at first of gold-thread-hair, not then common for a fancy dress, but afterwards I thought it would not please the

Italians, and decided on a clever red wig from our friend Clarkson. I was very proud of being married, I think, like Mrs Tanqueray, and took carriage to go to my lessons. I was a little more free with my entertaining in the evening. Maria was not there then, so I was for the first time in my life living alone with a maid.

FROM V. P. TO A. P., *1st September*.

Thank you for your lovely letter and parcel of the seven veils. The orange one is so lovely that I think it ought almost to be the first veil. But you will see when you come. I now think I am lucky in everything but business. It seems as if God—using as His instrument Ricordi—were stretching forth His hand to stop me from being a singer.

When Ludovici read the preface of the Shaw plays, he said first they reminded him of Heine. Then he said: "*Je crois que Shaw est entre Kiplin et Gwiilde, n'est-ce pas?*" This made me smile so much that I could not deny it. What is one to answer, after all?

Don't let Daddy accept Alhambra, whatever you do. Now he has got a sort of empire-making play, don't let him go down among the monkeys.[1]

[1] This play was *Drake*, in which he did not play in the first production, and I could not bear that my father should go to a music hall ever; though, perhaps it was snobbish on my part.

FROM V. P. TO A. P., *6th September.*

MILAN.

Although it must be one o'clock, I am not yet asleep. This is the first married letter I write to you, but who cares for that? I keep thinking of *Salome* and you—you and *Salome*. The agent, Indelicato by name, met me at the door and took me off immediately to interview newspapers and photographers, which he said would cost me a lot of money. But Dana[1] says that I am to spend money. Bless you for all you have done for me. Write me *Drake* news.

POEM ENCLOSED IN LETTER, *6th September.*

Yet unto our eyes
Absence clinges
Each other's sight,
And makes to us a constant night
When others change to light.

I give no way to griefe,
But let beliefe
Of mutual love,
This wonder to the vulgar, prove
Our bodies, not we, move.

Let not thy wit beweepe
Wounds, but sense deepe,
For while we misse,
By distance our lip loving blisse,
Even then our souls shall kisse.

[1] Dana, my father's right hand.

V. P. TO A. P., *9th September.*

I am sitting in front of the Castello, my throat having remained bad. Remember another time, either pack me straight off to Margate, or not to keep me in England at all when the weather is like that. Here it is perfectly boiling, and my flesh is roasting. I shan't go to your mother this week, for fear of getting my throat worse. Lakes are rheumatic things, and my throat doctor says it is a rheumatic throat; so I have to do just the ordinary swilling and taking hot things in and out.

Padovani, the director of the orchestra, came last night, and I tried to sing—and only tried—and he played me the whole of *Salome*. He is a tremendous admirer, I am glad to say, of Strauss and it, and has marvellous ideas musically for it; but it is twice as fast as Maria did it—really twice—so that "*no non voglio restar*" is one word, to all intents and purposes. I went to the photographer's, the big man here, a sort of Lafayette—an ordinary man with a beard—and he was quite mad about my poses. Mme. Bay was there too, and Speranza and Indelicato, and they said: "*Dio che razza di donne; Fuori del mondo*," and were quite crazy. If I can only sing it, darling! I ought to have left on the 20th, just when that throat began; but one always knows these things just too late. They now say last week in October. I think

Genoa is always fine. Remember that Max has tea out of doors on Christmas Day, and that is only half an hour or so away.

V. P. TO A. P., 11*th September*.

I am kept awake by thoughts of you, myself, and Westbourne Terrace [1]—also mosquitoes.

I feel gloomy about this horrible career and "waste," as Grenville Barker would have it; and the money thrown away, and all the difficulties never confronted, I feel sure, by really good artists—I mean those that were to become great artists. What a fool I was to be led away, and not to listen to the "bitters," like Hugh and Lady Speyer—and yet where shall we be if I give it up? We have counted on my making lots of money. I really am at a loss, as they say.

Darling, I have such wonderful ideas for that back room for you—of turning it into a complete sun parlour, with globes and stuffed birds on the top of shelves, and a piano with yellow keys and green silk back, then a few college groups, and, if possible, a very common-coloured over-life-sized photograph of somebody's grandfather over the mantelpiece, a patchwork rug, and some of our awfullest wedding presents, also

[1] We nearly took the Landon Ronald's house, but they decided not to leave it.

your racing cups, also our beer mugs, which were so cruelly despised. Max's caricatures, I think, might take a very friendly part. It seems such a short time now till the 1st of October and *Salome*. I shall be in a rush at the last, and as for "learning to sing," I haven't had a moment. I only hope there will be someone there to help me not to get into bad habits. This man (Padovani) won't allow any subtleties, only bangs away, loud, loud, on each note.

From V. P. to A. P., *12th September*.

I think my heart is a little fagged. Send me the prescription for my tonic, but I will take care. To-day, for instance, I was out by nine for hot air and cold inhalation,[1] back by ten to accompanist, then out for a little turn. Then writing and luncheon, sleep from 1.30–2.30, out to inhalation, tea with Cara's teacher, then to the ballerina, 5.30–6.30; now resting till dinner. At 9–10, Padovani (practice). Bed and bath, 10 o'clock. Does this sound too much? Well, at Genoa I shall have a lovely lazy life, only admiration, etc.

[1] I was trying every kind of drastic remedy that Dr Arkel could think of for my throat. First I thought of doing a bolt to Salzo Maggiore, but was told that at the clinic round the corner one could get "Salzo Maggiore" in concentrated essence. It was terrible the process. One entered a room full of vapour so thick and salt that one could not see—a very small room. In it were about fifty souls, male and female, in various stages of lung or throat disease; and the noise of their coughs, to put it mildly, was exasperating. I don't know how I survived it.

Garguilo, the manager at Genoa—damn him!—is the kind of man who says: "Why advertise her before heard? It will make it worse for her." Dana says the same. If the thing is a failure, it is a failure; and booming won't hurt a success. Look at *Drake*.

From V. P. to A. P., 19*th September*.

They now say that my tiredness is from singing *Traviata* on a cold. Fano insisted on taking me to another doctor.

The wings are a perfect dream, and curiously enough, very Aubrey Beardsley. If I do *Salome* in London ever, I have decided on black velvet and silver only.[1]

From H. H. A. to V. P., 19*th September*.

10 Downing Street.

This is only a line to say we start to-morrow, and shall be at 70, Rio dei Catacumeni, Venice, from Saturday onwards. As I don't know whether the Via Petri Verri is in Milan, or Genoa, or Rome, and your letter throws no light on the problem, I am sending this, as you suggested, to the theatre at Genoa, in the

[1] In this letter was enclosed a letter from Dana, saying that Mr Forsyth of Covent Garden was abroad, and what a pity it was that the production of *Salome* was postponed—"as it runs time too short to take advantage of your performance"—meaning that it would be rather late for them to engage me for the winter season.

hope that, by hook or by crook, it will find its way to you.

Write quickly, and let us meet if we can.

FROM V. P. TO A. P., *19th September.*

Beecham is, of course, in Venice. Higgins is, of course, in Milan. But am I any better for that? Betty Carlish on her way through. The sun is simply blazing.

I loved your mother so much at Como. She is so much happier and kind towards the world away from her worries in a happy, rich hotel with those angelic people, the Cunninghams, whom I really worship, and who worship me.

I have given the doctors till Friday night, and if not well about then, I leave for the seaside.

Speranza says: "*Lo sua voce non e brutta*," which is just about the truth. It is not ugly, but it isn't great.

Your key is in my old green travelling-bag; your red book, which Speranza intelligently hid, is upstairs in what is sarcastically called your dressing-room.

FROM MEMORY.

I left for Genoa after spending two or three days in bed, and much against the advice of Dr Arkel, who said I was not fit to go, as I had a terrible cold, caught

in the clinic. Both the Arkels were dead against my going. He wanted to make me a certificate to say that my voice was not in a fit condition, but my obstinacy supervened—at least, not quite obstinacy, but firm belief that I could not be beaten.

My clothes were all in order, and my photographs and contract, and I was seen off by Indelicato and Ludovici.

PART X

GENOA

PART X.

GENOA.

LETTER FROM A. P. TO V. P., *25th September.*

DARLING,—You are on the threshold of an enormous career, I am sure, and to accomplish this, you must be prepared now to spare no expense, no energy (and *equally* no *rest*), no hope, and no tact. The signs of it are small as a man's hand at present, a little cloud on the horizon, but it's all going to be all right.

Whatever turns up, whatever is discussed with anyone, the end is always "It all depends on Genoa," "Nothing can be settled till after Genoa." You must absolutely pin your faith on that now, and remember that it means all, and will either lead to all or nothing. Anyhow, you are on the brink of a great career, I know that.

Dana lunched with Forsyth, who was most encouraging and kind, but he explained that he only represented the syndicate on a sharing basis, that Beecham settled all these questions, and that if he (Forsyth)

were consulted at all, he certainly would speak for you. Then, by a stroke of luck, Dana had an hour's interview with Beecham, which he has told me about. He is writing to you himself, but I will just tell you things as I remember them. Firstly, he is trying to go to Genoa *himself*.[1] If he can't do this he will send somebody on whose judgment he can implicitly rely; and if he gets a good report he will proceed accordingly.

He didn't say to Dana that it was necessary to have a Salome whose name was known, *but* he said that if it were a choice ever between an English and a foreign artist, *he would always choose the English*. (English Salomes are few and far between.) He said that if you could sing *Salome*, there was not any question about your being able to sing *Rosenkavalier*. *But* as regards this latter opera he must make strict conditions.[2] His orchestra is ready to play the work now, and his singers can do it on three rehearsals. He says: "I cannot let myself in for forty rehearsals for the sake of one artist. If she is to sing in *Rosenkavalier*,[3] she must first of all sing the part in a German town for a performance or two, so that she can come in on equal terms with the others. This is easily to be managed, and *I will do it for her*. This, of course,

[1] All the more important for you to get dates *fixed* soon.

[2] Surely to have got him to this point is great ?

[3] He opens with *Rosenkavalier* at Covent Garden.

only applies to *Rosenkavalier*. As regards *Salome*, he said, of course, that he must have many more artists than the one ready for it.

Then Dana asked him point-blank what he thought of your voice. He said last time he heard you he was amazed at the change in power and quality.[1]

The crab at the back of his mind, *the only doubt*, I imagine,[2] is that he does not know whether you are "musically correct" enough. (You remember you came in at the wrong place in the *Louise*—this was fatal, and has made this doubt in his mind.) This of course, as B. said, will be seen at Genoa, as "if she can sing *Salome*, she can sing *Rosenkavalier* or anything."

So this is really what is wanted. There is a sense of expectation created in the breasts of people like Beecham and F., and if you make a great success at Genoa all these seeds that have been sown now will burst into bloom. It does seem to me excellent, and that for the moment things have gone far enough, and should not be pushed further. B. said: "As a matter of personal sentiment, of course, I need hardly say that I would prefer to have her to anyone."

One must remember that he will be having influence brought on him probably for twenty or thirty other singers, and be careful not to make any false or hasty

[1] This with that awful cold.

[2] Dana told me not to tell you this, so don't enlarge on it.

step *before* the event. Now their eyes are wide open for *Salome*. This is the chief thing we needed. I think it's just possible Sir Herbert may be a little over-zealous for your cause in the old way—*i.e.* with the Press. Dana had a letter from him saying: "Go and see the editor of the *D. Telegraph*." This he is not going to act on, as he says he is crotchety and might refuse; and that if he refused Lawson would have to back his editor up, even if he wanted to go a bust on you. The thing is for your father to speak personally to Lawson. I don't know whether my *Morning Post* scheme is practicable, but that's anyhow after the event.

Dana says by all means write to Strauss; but he says it is extremely important that this should come direct from you, in your handwriting, or at any rate signed by you, and posted from Italy. He strongly dissuaded me from writing myself or letting anybody else—this was my own feeling. I will get a letter drafted in German on the lines set out by you, and send it out for you to sign and send on; but if you think that time is short, write at once yourself to Strauss (this would be best, I think) and then you needn't use my letter. I'm sure it would be best for you to do this. Salter, of course, I can manage for you.

Well, of course, as I say, all these things must not be magnified, as they are as yet only signs, indications; but to me they are of colossal importance, and the fact that

everything depends on your Genoa success, and that you are yourself *confident* of success, goes for much. Remember it is not a success of the Italian audience or critics that you are judged by, as regards these men, but either by themselves or their direct representatives, so that the possible capriciousness of the Italian people doesn't matter so much. Well, for the time being, fix on that. For God's sake, don't look round any more and say things like "Where is all this going to lead to?" The question is: "Where on earth is it *not* going to lead to?" And plan out your life accordingly. Rest is as important as anything; and don't, for Heaven's sake, let any outside influences—tea parties or Ludovici's or anything—intrude themselves. Of course, you know I hold strong opinions about your dancing, and am convinced that you must give them stuff *straight from the mint*—especially in view of your new audience. Anything else would be fatal. I know and fear that dreadful point of view of yours—so mistaken—"These men know Italian audiences and what they like." When a thing's perfect in itself, don't go and adulterate it. Here I am right. Your health is dreadfully important. Hope you got the prescription? Furber sent it, I hope. I'm so excited and moved about all this. I feel I could just flay myself alive to move it on—but I think things must stand for a little as they are. Don't say anything to discourage all this. If you are in doubt, don't speak,

but just go forward to that one end. Don't ever be able to look back on this, and see that you were a *foolish virgin*, and that if your lamp had been well lit with the oil of hope, expectation, and confidence, all would have been well.

Send for Furber if you're not well—*anything*—spare *nothing*. I mean it dreadfully.

From V. P. to A. P., *1st October*.

Hotel Bavaria, Genoa.

Perhaps you are annoyed at my starting, or too anxious; and perhaps, as you say, your "precious gift of silence, a silence for the tongues of nightingales" will serve you best.

Well, apart from this, I got up from my bed in Milan yesterday to come here, and now I am here, look! I thought simply a fishing-place like Bognor, or perhaps Chatham, instead of which Rome, with London and Manchester and Hudson Bay attached. The theatre, Covent Garden as to auditorium, though smaller as to stage. I, for the first time for two months, opened my mouth and sang for all I was worth with the conductor for half an hour. I thought "Better do for myself and get it over," instead of which I found glorious high notes and no fatigue after, but, as ever, complete loss of middle notes. Some say fatigue after

Traviata, but you'll remember that at St George's Chapel, the last time I sang out, there was nothing so specially wrong. I am pretty wild, but they are so good here and anxious to wait instead of saying "The rotten singer." They are trying to get a specialist. This gives me till Sunday. If not better then, I have to give up, which is only fair to me and them. I am sure it is the sea that I need. Dash it! Dash it! Margate for thirty hours! The sea is lovely here too, and I shall go every day till I drop. I am perfectly well in health, but I need money.

It was I who suggested to Mr Langton about the Syng money.[1] He is one of my godfathers, I believe, but I won't swear.

From Memory

Genoa.

My life at this time can hardly be imagined for a strange mixture of worries, some self-imposed, some brought by people, some—the greatest, of course—brought by Destiny.

The self-imposed worries were thinking about expenses, rooms, the comfort of my maid; about my

[1] I must have heard from my father that Mr Syng, an old friend of his, was leaving me some money; and all were agreed that a legacy could not be better spent than on my first desperate throw. I believe this money was sent to me and was spent in this way; but if it is not so, those who know must correct me.

hat being the wrong hat, about trying to curry favour with the other prima donna who sang Marguerite. Then there were constant visitors, like my teacher, the young men from Milan, my Uncle Max and his wife, and Lady Diana Manners. These last came thinking they were going to hear me make an epoch-making success, and believing that my fears were only fitful, and that I wanted to keep my *début* quiet. These visitors were marvellously sweet and considerate, but wanted a lot of attention, though not asking it; and Diana always wanted to hear me sing, and thought it cruel of me not to take her to rehearsals with me. The rehearsals were a nightmare, in a little practice-room in the theatre, with the other members of the cast, including John the Baptist, yelling beautifully and easily in Italian; and then, with my mouth full of lozenges, my weak, beastly voice in the leading rôle came through, too anxious and labouring to be even *a tempo*. Every now and then I rushed from the room and drank quinine, or red wine from a flask, anything to make a little answering note when I opened my mouth. Then back to find Padovani, the conductor, mopping his brow, with nerves.

The Italians never said a word, but simply: "How are you? Better?"

I had to have lunch with them all in the pension (this was one of my self-imposed tortures), and be cheerful, and make the salad, and hear about

their triumphs, or be chaffed about my recent marriage.

Then there was Poli—dear, dear Poli—the doctor who was so sorry for me, and genuinely, as he did not even expect to be paid. He knew that there was nothing wrong with my general health or my mental outlook, but that my chord was terribly wrong. He used to paint it with nitrate of silver every day—at which I never winked. He said : " This woman would let me cut her head off if it made her able to sing." Indeed, I told him by then, frenziedly and stupidly, that if he got me right for this one appearance, I did not care what happened after. I was, of course, losing all sense of proportion by then. My old trouble, " revenge " on those who wanted to see me fail, made me hit out blindly. I sang in the theatre aloud, holding on to the high notes by sheer will. What was so crushing was that the part suited my voice so well, and that the musicians present saw through the fog, that I should make good if only—if only—the voice was there.

Every morning when I woke I would try my voice. This was a pitiful delusion, because always, after the night's silence and rest, it sounded just a very little better, and by eleven it was nearly gone again.

When A. P. came, it of course distracted my thoughts a little. We went for long walks near the harbour; then I would suddenly wonder if that was tiring, and

take a carriage and go inland among the orange trees.

We had wonderful meals of white camembert and truffle, and *frutta di mare* at the world-famous Carlo Felice Restaurant.

There was an American at the pension, a composer, who, with his wife and mother, made a blot on our lives. He was far less "for me" than the other artists, or at least he hadn't their politeness and geniality. Perhaps they all hated me, and my money, and my rotten voice; but they did not show it like he did. He was afraid that if *Salome* were not given, his opera would not have a hearing, as it was arranged to be done with *Salome*.

Salome was, of course, a very difficult part to face, because of the singer having to be "of reasonable stature," and able to dance and to act.

At times I was quite happy and "don't care-ish" with A. P. It was only that they would wait and keep on trying my voice, because as yet they had no one else.

I kept no count of time—each day was an hour or a year, according to what became of me and my hopes.

A. P. had to return to work, leaving me as I was. We discussed my going back with him, and sometimes my box was almost packed; but then the voice would give a flutter, and there would be a doubt; and Alan

had to leave without me, and without hearing me utter a note that was healthy.

I sent off a telegram as follows: "Ask Furber prescribe. Sunday their ultimatum."

From V. P. to A. P., *5th October.*

Genoa.

I am getting a little more hopeful, as either Furber's [1] prescription, or the electric massage, is making a slight improvement in my voice; but it is still muffled on those notes. When will you, all of you, realise that my throat is partly, and very slightly, paralysed? This last man calls it "*inossificato.*" Garguilo is most kind, and has given me till Monday, when you receive this; but that, my dear, is the beauty of money. If I had been paid by him, like an ordinary mortal, he would have sent me packing at once. Remember this, if I don't sing *Salome* I shall be seriously shaken in my intention for a career.

A new complication is that Strauss is coming to the first night. This will do us in if he doesn't approve my voice. But, on the other hand, it may make us.

I have seen a very clean but squalid apartment on

[1] Furber, our family doctor, philosopher, and friend.

the sea, five flights up, with pension for us three—you, me, Speranza. Ten francs a day without midday meal, which we take at the pension over the theatre, or at a restaurant, *Qualunque*. Would you like that ? The stairs are very trying, but a beautiful view.

It is understood I sing.

P.S.—Realise that it is not pain, or even hoarseness, but only numbness.

From V. P. to A. P., *9th October*.

I can't help feeling a little aggrieved that you and Furber and half-a-dozen others should think me capable of *lâcheté* or giving in. You know it is absolutely outside my nature. I shall stay till I am absolutely turned off the stage by the impresario. Far more important that I take trouble to explain my wire and telegram and letter to six different persons, so there can be no mistake that I HAVE GOT CHRONIC ASPHYXIATION OF VOCAL CHORDS, CAUSE RHEUMATISM AND FATIGUE COMBINED, BEFORE AND AFTER MY MARRIAGE. Just because I mentioned a cold and slight influenza as another grievance, it doesn't say that the broken leg, as it were, is healed. The cold naturally aggravates the weak part, but the weak part remains. It was getting better, but I never said it was well, and imagined that until lately. I have tried to make light of it to all of

you. When you and Furber get together, and prescribe ammoniated quinine,[1] when all the greatest throat specialists have failed to find a remedy, it simply irritates me.

I am buying the inhalation Furber sent, because it is good for rheumatism, too, I suppose; but if Furber had only read my letter a month ago, he could have prescribed much more gravely to the physical side, instead of thinking it mental.

What griefs I have I would sooner take them upon myself. It would be impossible for me to bear it for half an hour if you or Mother were there. Saturday all will be known and settled.

I have let everything slide now about the costume, but you may bring me some nice blue moon-coloured beads, looking moonstones and sapphires, and two scarves.

TELEGRAM FROM LADY TREE, *7th October*.

Courage, darling. Alan leaves London Monday, or latest, Tuesday. MOTHER.

[1] The prescription came by telegram from Dr Furber, giving me the best remedy for relaxed throat; but my right vocal chord was by then torn beyond recognition, and I was singing then on the other fairly sound chord.

V. P. TO A. P., *10th October.*

I suppose you are furious with me. No one can help that. I have a brute of a doctor, who puts things up my nose and down my throat; but he is supposed to be the best in Europe,[1] so I suppose it's all right.

Garguilo is an angel, and says my voice sounds lovely on the stage, and that he won't let the public be disappointed of me. We have another woman till I am ready.

I offered, of course, to resign, but he wouldn't let me. He said he had rather exceptional trouble in my case. *Salome* was fixed for 15th November—he altered it to 22nd October because there was such enthusiasm. It will all be announced properly, and serve our purpose just as well. They can't alter the date because *Mephistopheles* went badly, and they have to put *Salome* quickly in its place. Of course, you must needs hate me for telling you not to come to-day. Lucky you didn't, as Diana[2] arrives by the same train, and God knows how long she'll stay.

I am longing to see you, and really was content to give the whole thing up. Anxiety after a time is so numbing. God! I do pity you my moods! Greatest love to Mother. I have become better, only loath-

[1] Doctor Poli of Genoa, a really first-rate man, the best in Italy.

[2] Lady Diana Manners.

somely ugly again. My eyes "*altro che calm!*" (*Altro che*, the reverse of.)

From V. P. to A. P.

Racanelli's treatment no use.[1] Don't be surprised. I expect to get little telegrams from England to say, "Take three drops of eucalyptus on a handkerchief."

Garguilo was sweet last night, and said: "I will wait even a month, but I want you to sing."

They were all furious at the pension that you did not go and say "good-bye" to them. You have been wonderful. Many thanks for all your love.

I shall return to Milan Thursday, unless I wire to the contrary. Poli says the lump on my chord will only go with an operation—advises Sinclair Thompson. That would probably mean three months' rest. I am utterly opposed to it. Would prefer a year's rest to the risk of weakening throat for life from operation.

Telegram from Sir Herbert, 24*th October*.[2]

Am very anxious. Wire immediately how you are in general health. Daddy.

[1] Racanelli, a nice, great big singer who was the only unjealous, kind woman to me, more like an Englishwoman, and a real good sort. She made a very good career later.

[2] These are only a very few of the showers of telegrams which bewildered the postal authorities of Genoa.

TELEGRAM FROM LADY TREE, *28th October.*

If impresario grants fortnight's time, don't hesitate; come England immediately, see Forsyth and Richard Lake greatest chord specialist. Go Margate and return Genoa cured. Hang expense. MOTHER.

TELEGRAM FROM DANA, *29th October.*

LONDON.

Is date you definitely appear settled yet? DANA.

TELEGRAM FROM SIR HERBERT, *4th November.*

Wire result immediately. Would like come Genoa *via* Venice, Milan, if news unsatisfactory. Will go Berlin, Reinhardt productions.

TELEGRAM FROM SIR HERBERT, *7th November.*

GENOA—VENICE.

If can be useful will fetch you Genoa if wire to-night. DADDY.

FROM MEMORY.

It was extremely foolish of me—indeed, foolish is a very small word—not to give up at this point and return with Alan. At least, I should have had the comfort of feeling that that side of my life—my marriage—had

succeeded, and that A. P.'s career at all events was fixed; but I had a desperate longing to succeed, which was partly, as I said in my letter, a desire for revenge, which I still have against those who had decided that I would fail. I wonder if Alan believed in my power of getting better or not. I think that he, like all the people in England who could not, and did never, see the state of my throat (technically), thought that it was a question of nerves. "Don't think, just sing," was constantly in their minds.

I remember I slept well, with a formaline lamp hissing in my room. It is a wonder I wasn't asphyxiated, for I had about six cold bandages round my throat, as tight as the bandages that horses have round their hocks. The terrors that went by day were the American composer; the certainty that other singers were being tried; and the expectancy that I might at any moment be called up for the last ordeal, which would finally decide them that I could not sing.

The poor impresario wandered about black with despair, murmuring that he was "*senza spectacolo*," and that I must pull myself together.

At last word came that I must go down to the theatre, or for ever after be silent. Speranza, who had never believed in me very much, thinking I had not the *forza*, dressed me up, not of course in *Salome* clothes, as it was not a rehearsal, only an audition for me.

She did not want me to go, as she had to stay behind, as it was time for her baby, and she thought the journey would kill it.

I wore a yellow chiffon blouse—and an accordion-pleated white skirt—badly made and about three yards long. I had the delusion that it would help my dancing, if such a thing were required of me by the impresario. I got on to the stage, which was brilliantly lit, the house pitch dark and empty. I thought I would practise the dance, and my hands were blue with cold; so I caught hold of a strolling accompanist, and sat him down with my score at the piano in the wings. I began to dance, the famous dance of the Seven Veils, which covered my white dress; in fact, I must have looked like a rag-bag turned inside out. I began dancing dramatically and uncontrollably; my balance was gone, I was shaky; the sweat poured off my face; the last violent bit was simply reeling, not turning. When I finished, breathless, the impresario and the conductor had entered the stalls and were nudging each other, and smoking their cigars. I knew that my last vestige of prestige had gone, as my dancing and my appearance on the stage had been my mythical but strong point. They said something like "It's very fatiguing, isn't it? Perhaps you'd rather not sing." I naturally said that it was not in the least fatiguing, and warmed me up, and I would sing. I said, "Which bit should I do?" "All of it," said the conductor,

"If you don't know your part now, you will never know it."

The first passage of *Salome* wants delicate and petulant singing, right in the middle of one's voice. I started on the right bar, but it was simply a blank —the voice was not there.

I must have gone on singing in a rather doped way, for they stopped me, and put me on to the big aria—the first big aria—the love-song to John the Baptist, "*Sono in-amorato del tuo corpo*," with its silvery nightingale passion. It is on very high notes, with large drops into the bass, and I suppose I made something of it; but I knew it had taken all my strength, and that in the morning I should have no voice left. I was glad that it removed the last doubt. We all said very little, our group just melted away.

I think, knowing the truth suddenly, and however bitterly, always gives you a thrill of exaltation, for the moment at all events. I had the feeling of certainty, of courage, which all the castles in the air had never given me.[1]

I left in the early morning for Milan, sending the following telegram to A. P., and characteristically paying the reply :—

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[1] "To-night *Salome*.—For this part the management have engaged Anice Baron in place of Madame Viola Tree, who could not be appreciated by our public because of the very grave illness of her throat."

8th November.

MILAN.

Useless, darling; hope travel home with Daddy. Tell mother gently.

A. P.'s REPLY, *8th November.*

Most dear Viola, come home quickly.

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